SALLY IN HER FUR COAT

by

ELIZA ORNE WHITE

With scissor cuts by

LISL HUMMEL

$1.75

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SALLY is not a little girl, but a pussy-cat, and the story is a successor to Miss White's 'Brothers in Fur.' The kittens are left orphans at an early age, but, as Sally remarks more than once, 'If you have to be an orphan, it is better to be twins.'

Oxford is self-reliant and of a buoyant temperament, while Sally is a kitten of moods. Other characters are Peter, a waif, Captain Ebony Black, a traveling cat, and Spot, a wire-haired terrier.

Miss White has told their story in her inimitable style, which has brought her books steadily increasing popularity with young readers.

Lavishly illustrated with scissor-cuts by L. Hummel

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SALLY IN HER FUR COAT

SALLY IN HER FUR COAT WAS RACING THROUGH THE GARDEN (*page* 1)

SALLY IN HER FUR COAT

By

ELIZA ORNE WHITE

AUTHOR OF 'BROTHERS IN FUR,' ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM SCISSOR-CUTS BY

LISL HUMMEL

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TO

ELIZABETH F. DUNDASS

AND

MARGARET COLTER

True friends of all in coats of fur,
Beloved by every cat and kitten,
Welcomed with many a heart-felt purr,
Here, gratefully your names are written.

The world is wide and full of wondrous things
For all God's creatures, whether great or small,
For those who soar aloft on spreading wings,
Or those who, earth-bound, never fear a fall.
But surely kittens have a joyous time,
With ears attuned to every tiny sound,
And with the power the loftiest tree to climb,
And eyes that see all creatures on the ground.
The patter of the rain upon the leaves,
The ants that swiftly build their tiny house,
The wind that's but a gentle summer breeze,
The stealthy tread of an alluring mouse —
All this is joy; how could one wish to be
A man or woman with closed ears and eyes
To all the treasures of the land and sea,
And to the glory of the earth and skies?
And even a child, though nearer to the ground,
Is often heedless of this wondrous earth,
Where such enthralling histories are found.
Who would not be a kitten full of mirth?

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SALLY IN HER FUR COAT

CHAPTER I

THE ORPHANS

Sally in her fur coat was racing through the garden and flying through the Wild Wood, as if an enemy were in hot pursuit. She was a very young kitten and small of her age. Her pursuer was not an enemy, but her twin brother, Oxford Gray, Junior. But although they were born on the same day, Oxford Gray, Junior, was much fatter than Sally, and he had shorter legs, so he could never catch up with his little sister. After a time, he grew tired of the chase, but, being Sally's brother and protector, he did not like to own it, so he said:

'Sally, I am sure all this running about must be bad for you. Come and lie down under that giant hemlock and we'll have a good rest.'

'I am not in the least tired,' said Sally, and off she scampered again.

By this time Oxford Gray, Junior, was fairly panting.

'I am sure this mad dash will use you up,' he said, for he did not like to own that he was tired.

It finally dawned on Sally that this might be the case, but, being wise beyond her weeks, she did not speak of this, but came over and joined her brother under the shade of the giant hemlock in the Wild Wood. There were many of these hemlocks as well as oak trees. They were all about as high as a man's shoulders, but they seemed immense to the kittens. They were sometimes spoken of by people as underbrush, but people are often stupid about many matters, as every cat knows. Of course all this conversation was carried on in kitten language, not in actual words.

The two kittens curled up under the shade of the giant hemlock in the Wild Wood, and put their

paws about each other's necks. They were tiger kittens and looked so much alike that when they were apart, it was hard to tell which was Sally and which was Oxford Gray, Junior. When they were together, one saw that Oxford Gray, Junior, was larger, and that he had more of a white shirt-front than his sister, and he had a pink nose which she envied, for hers was just a tiger nose. One also noticed a great difference in their expressions, for Sally had a sad little face, while Oxford Gray, Junior, looked prosperous and thoroughly contented with himself. At times it almost seemed as if he smiled.

'We are two very unfortunate kittens,' said Sally; 'it is sad to be orphans.'

'We've got to make the best of it,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'Other kittens have been orphans before us and others will be orphans after us. Sally, you must brace up.'

'When I think of my brave father and of my darling mother, so cozy and so kind, and of how they mysteriously disappeared, I can't brace up,' said Sally. 'I am sure we are going to starve.'

'Not while I have my good right paw,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'I will get food for you.'

'You? How? What will you get?'

'I will catch a mouse,' said Oxford Gray, Junior, magnificently. 'Our father was a mighty hunter.'

'But you are hardly larger than a mouse yourself,' said Sally. 'Father said so.'

'That was a very long time ago,' said her brother. 'I have grown since then, and there must be many baby mice just as there are small kittens. I will be on the lookout for a very young mouse, Sally.'

'I am sure we shall starve before you can catch a mouse,' said Sally, 'for there don't seem to be any around. We can't live on flies, and they are very hard to catch.'

If Sally had been a little girl, she would have cried bitterly, but, being a kitten, she was more self-controlled.

'Where are we going to get our next meal?' she persisted.

'It will somehow come,' said Oxford Gray, Junior, who was an optimist.

He sometimes provoked Sally very much, for she was sure she saw things as they really were.

'We got some milk other days at that little house,' he said.

'Yes, but it is closed to-day,' she reminded him.

'Other houses will be open,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. He glanced up as he spoke and looked first at one of the two houses that were near the Wild Wood and then at the other. One house was very attractive, lying low in the valley with a pretty garden and a giant rhododendron tree on either side of the front door. The buds were swelling and beginning to show a hint of crimson. 'We'll try to get food at that house,' said Oxford Gray, Junior.

'Don't you remember what father told us about that house?' said Sally. 'He said it had the secret mark that is only known to cats, that says, "No cats need apply here for food. This is a no-good house."'

'Yes, I remember now,' said her brother, 'but father said the other house was all right. That has a secret mark that says, "Welcome, Cats."'

'We are not cats,' said Sally. 'We are such small kittens I am afraid no one will see us; father called us "kittenettes,"' and at the memory of her father, Sally once more looked very sad.

'What's the use of worrying?' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'Something always has turned up and something always will.'

'That is rather an ugly house, I think,' said Sally, as she looked at the gray house on the hill that said, in its secret language, 'Welcome, Cats.' 'It seems all pointed roofs and it hasn't such a pretty garden as the other house.'

'I don't care about its looks,' said her brother. 'Don't you remember how mother once said, "Handsome is that handsome does," when you wished you were an Angora with long yellow fur?'

'Yes, I remember,' said Sally, 'but I wish I were a yellow Angora just the same. I'd like to be a handsome kitten.'

'I don't care at all how I look,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'I'd rather be myself. If you were a yellow Angora with long fur, you would not have

me for your twin. How would you like to lose me, Sally?'

At this terrible suggestion, Sally put her paws all the more firmly around her brother's neck.

'You are the whole world to me, Oxford Gray, Junior,' she said; 'grandmother, and father and mother and brother, too. The others have all disappeared, and you are all I have left. It is sad to be orphans,' she wailed again, in her thought transference language; 'but if one has to be an orphan, it is better to be twins.'

Now Sally and Oxford Gray, Junior, had been so busy about their own concerns that they had not noticed that a lady came to the bow window of the house that said 'Welcome, Cats,' in its secret language, and that her eyes rested on the brother and sister in their fur coats, and so it was a great surprise when they saw her come down the piazza steps. They were frightened and scampered off as fast as they could go. The lady put a large blue-and-white dinner plate down on the grass and, looking around her as if searching for the kittens, she went back into the house.

'Poor darlings,' she said, and there were tears in her eyes; 'poor kittens to have lost their mother when they were so young!'

A faint odor of fish greeted the kittens.

'I do believe there is fish on that plate,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'Let us go and see.'

When they reached the plate, they saw it had on it a large piece of mackerel cut in mouthfuls that would just suit them and some potato and green vegetable about the color of grass. Perhaps it was cooked grass. They had never seen it before. It had a most satisfying smell. Then the hungry kittens leaned over the blue-and-white plate, one on one side and one on the other, and they hungrily ate the delicious fish. Sally ate daintily and slowly, but Oxford Gray, Junior, gobbled his portion down very fast and then ate what was left of Sally's share.

Sally hit him with her paw. There were things that even the gentle Sally could not stand.

'That isn't fair,' she said.

'I need more to keep me alive than you do,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'If I am going to hunt for food for the pair of us, I have to be well fed.'

'Do you think you could catch fish?' Sally asked. 'I like fish even better than mouse.'

'Father was a mighty hunter, but I never heard that he was a fisherman,' said her brother. 'I am afraid I shall have to stick to hunting. But we are all right for to-day, Sally. Always trust to me. Did not I tell you something would turn up?'

CHAPTER II

THE COLD NIGHT

It rained that afternoon, a cold piercing rain and the thermometer went down. Nothing like the cold had been known for years in the month of May. But the kittens did not know this, as they had only weeks to judge by. They were afraid this sort of weather might last for many days.

'Where can we spend the night?' Sally asked Oxford Gray, Junior.

Oxford Gray, for once, was at a loss.

'If only Elvira would come to the door of the gray house and see us, she would be sure to let us in.'

'I don't know about houses,' said Sally. 'Mother warned me about houses. She said she had lost faith in every one since her first owners were so unkind and left her to starve when they moved to another town.'

'Father did not feel that way,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'He said Elvira let him into the house one night when there was a great snowstorm, whatever that is. He said if trouble ever came and we could get where Elvira could see us, we'd be safe and happy.'

'Does the house belong to Elvira?'

'Father wasn't sure. He had been told it belonged to Miss Winifred Mann. But he said if it did, it seemed strange she should take so little interest in it. He said she seemed to be out of it most of the time, while Elvira stayed in it and made it look pretty and cooked lots of meals for people and cats, especially cats. Father said Miss Winifred wasn't a bad sort, and that she could talk very pleasantly to a cat, but that was very little good if a fellow wanted a square meal. Anyway, the house is the thing to go to on a stormy night like this. Maybe this is a snowstorm.'

'It can't be,' said Sally. 'Father said snow was white, and that it made the earth look pretty. Oh, dear, I wish he hadn't gone away.'

'Brace up, Sally,' said Oxford Gray, Junior, who

felt it would be easier to brace up himself if he had the satisfaction of scolding some one.

'Where are we to spend the night if we can't get into the house?' Sally asked. 'That place under the piazza has been fixed so that nothing can get in any more.'

'There are other places where we might find shelter,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'I'll go and explore.'

'I'll come along with you,' said Sally, who did not like to be left alone. 'When I think of my brave father and my darling mother ——'

'Oh, shut up, Sally,' said her brother.

As Sally was wise beyond her weeks, she knew that Oxford Gray, Junior, must be very cold and unhappy, or he would not be so cross, so with her usual wisdom she said:

'Oxford Gray, Junior, you will have to be like a father to me, you are so brave, and I will try to be a mother to you; at least, I can be loving.'

At these words Oxford Gray, Junior, felt a pleasant glow about the region of his heart and the cold rain did not seem to matter so much. He did

not say anything, for he was a shy kitten so far as expressing his feelings was concerned, but Sally knew by the expression of his face that he was pleased with her words.

'If we are orphans, it is good to be twins,' she said again.

The kittens wandered about in the heavy rain. They were cold and forlorn, but Sally did not dare

to speak of her brave father or her kind mother again. The two houses that stood inside the same fence seemed asleep. No one came to any of the windows.

'Let's go down into the street,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'Perhaps in some of the houses on the street there will be some one who likes kittens.'

It was quite a long way to the street, down a winding avenue, so the kittens took a short cut through the Wild Wood, and when the street was reached Oxford Gray, Junior, was timid about crossing it, for automobiles were going by very fast.

'It hardly seems safe for you to cross, Sally,' he said. 'I think I had better go and look around first.'

'I don't want to be left behind,' said Sally, and before Oxford Gray, Junior, knew what she was doing, Sally had gone across the street so fast that it seemed as if she were flying. Oxford Gray, Junior, watched his chance and went across to join her.

They went along past the row of apartment houses, but no one came out to say a friendly word to the unfortunate kittens.

'Let's go around to the back of the houses,' said

Sally. 'I'm very hungry. Maybe some one will give us something to eat.'

Oxford Gray, Junior, followed his enterprising sister, and there on the back porch of a house was a saucer of milk. They could hardly believe their eyes.

'Didn't I tell you,' said Oxford Gray, Junior, 'that something nice would happen?'

Oxford Gray, Junior, took his place on one side of the saucer of milk, and Sally took her place on the other side and they began to lap the milk in haste. When it was all but gone, they heard the opening of a door, and Sally saw an angry woman coming out of it.

'You little thieves, you little scoundrels!' said the woman. 'You come and steal our cat's milk!'

'They were probably very hungry,' said a man in a kind voice.

'It's bad enough to feed one cat, because you are so daft on them,' said the woman, 'but I can't feed the whole neighborhood. Scat! Get away with you and never show your tiger faces here any more, you brats!'

The kittens fairly flew down the steps and out into the pouring rain.

'Well, we had a good meal, anyhow,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'How could we tell the milk wasn't meant for any kitten that got there first?'

They went back to the Wild Wood. It seemed more like home than any other place, and Oxford Gray, Junior, always had the hope that the door of the gray house on the hill might open and kind Elvira come out and welcome him.

At last they found an opening under one of the piazzas. This one had not as yet been fixed so that no animal could crawl in and take shelter there. It was a small hole, but large enough for Sally to get in easily. Oxford Gray, Junior, had to squeeze in.

'Didn't I tell you that we should find shelter?' he said.

Sally wanted to say, 'Oh, shut up!' but, being wise beyond her weeks, she said nothing.

She did not like the shelter. It was not her idea of what a home should be. There were cracks in the boards that let in some of the rain, and there was a musty smell that she did not like, and it was cold, even there.

Oxford Gray, Junior, fell asleep long before she did. She stayed awake a long time, trying to plan out some way of getting into some warm house where they could have a fire and some good food to eat. Her mother had told her of such a house where she had spent her early days before her owners moved away and left her behind, and her brave father had told her of three where he had been an honored guest.

The rain kept on pattering on the boards overhead, and Sally grew more and more forlorn and thought of her brave father and her dear mother, and life seemed hard. She was provoked with her brother for taking things so calmly.

What should she do without him, though?

At last she went to sleep, repeating to herself her refrain, 'If one has to be an orphan, it is better to be twins.'

CHAPTER III

THE CAPTURE

The next morning the sun shone brightly, and this in itself made the kittens feel in better spirits. Oxford Gray, Junior, who had had a fine night's sleep, was positively gay, and Sally forbore to mention her brave father and her dear mother. Perhaps, after all, Oxford Gray, Junior, was right and something would turn up.

And something did turn up. It was toward the end of the afternoon, and they were beginning to wonder where they were to get their next meal. Oxford Gray, Junior, had caught a fly or two and found some bugs, but he had not been able to get a mouse. He had felt it important to keep up his own

strength, as he had to take care of Sally, and she ought to learn to brace up and look out for herself. She did get a couple of bugs, and they had had a little grass, but no plate of fish had been put out for them again, for no one had seen them.

They were at play under the giant rhododendron bush that was on the south side of the pretty house that was not friendly to cats, when the exciting event happened. The front door opened, and out of it came a very pretty young lady. She had yellow hair and wore a pretty blue dress, and was exactly the sort of a lady that Sally would like to be herself, with a warm house to live in with plenty of food.

'Goodness,' said the pretty girl, 'something must be done about you, poor little dears,' and she looked from Sally to Oxford Gray, Junior. 'If only my cook liked cats — as it is, I can't keep you myself.'

She stooped and picked Sally up and started in the direction of the gray house on the hill.

When Sally found that Oxford Gray, Junior, was left behind, she was very unhappy. She kept saying in her own language: 'Please, I can't be separated from my dear, brave brother. I have lost my grand-

mother, and my darling mother, so cozy and so kind, and my brave father, the mighty hunter, and my brother is all I have.'

The lady, however, did not seem to understand, for she went straight on toward the gray house. Then Sally began to struggle frantically to get out of the hand of the pretty lady. She scratched as hard as she could with her small claws. Without Oxford Gray, Junior, there would be no happiness in life. She would rather live in the Wild Wood with him and be hungry and cold than to be warm and well fed without him.

'It is wicked to separate twins,' she said, but, in spite of all her scratchings, the lady walked on to the door of the gray house.

As they approached the door, to Sally's joy, she saw with her own bright eyes the sign her father had described to her, 'Welcome, Cats.' There was a knocker on the door and the pretty lady gave a loud rap, and presently it was opened and Elvira stood before them. Sally was sure it was Elvira, for she had the beaming look when she saw Sally that her father had described.

'What shall I do about this kitten?' the pretty lady asked. 'I can't keep it, and the mother does not seem to be around.'

'There are two of them,' said Elvira; 'I have seen two.'

'Yes, there is another one outside, but he was scampering off so fast I don't know that I can catch him.'

'Oh, please do,' Sally said in her own language, 'or else let me go, I can't be separated from him.'

At last she had come across some one who understood kitten language, for Elvira said: 'It would be a pity to separate them. Wherever they go, they should be kept together. Miss Mann has not planned to have any more cats, and yet, if she sees the kittens, maybe — at any rate, I'll give them shelter for the night and a good square meal.'

'I'll see if I can catch the other,' said the lady.

'That will be very kind of you, Mrs. Conant,' said Elvira.

'Mrs. Conant' — so she was a married lady. Sally had not dreamed of this, she looked so young.

Now, Oxford Gray, Junior, when he was left alone

was very disconsolate. He had not realized how fond he was of his little sister. To lose Sally — why, to lose her was like losing the sun out of the sky. Sally might be sad and woe-begone, just as the sun might hide behind clouds, but you knew the bright Sally would come back. And now she had gone, and it might be that she, too, like his grandmother, and his father, and mother, would never be seen again.

'I'd be better to her if I only had her back,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'I'd let her have more of the food, but of course she really ought to learn to brace up.'

It seemed a long time to Oxford Gray, Junior, before the lady came down the steps of the house without Sally, for when one is not many weeks old, minutes seem very long.

'What have you done with my sister?' Oxford Gray, Junior, asked sternly; but the lady, although she looked unusually intelligent, evidently could not understand his language.

Well, at any rate, he was not going to be caught until he knew more about the lady. So he made a mad dash for the garden. The lady ran after him

and they had an exciting race. He jumped up on top of a barrel and she reached after him; he went under a garden seat, and the agile lady ducked

down after him; he gave a flying leap, and it almost seemed as if she gave a flying leap, too. At last, panting and exhausted, he stopped for breath and the lady captured him. He, like his sister, scratched her pretty hand. She went straight to the door

through which she had taken Sally. She gave a loud rap with the knocker and Elvira appeared at the door.

'I have caught the other one,' she said.

'Bless his furry heart and his pink nose,' said Elvira. 'I am sure this one is a boy; he seems so brave and he led you such a chase.'

Then Oxford Gray, Junior, swelled with pride.

'He's the image of his father, Oxford Gray,' said Elvira, 'even to the pink nose. He's much fatter than the other kitten, but she seems a dear little thing.'

'Well, I'll leave the pair of them in your care,' said Mrs. Conant, as she put Oxford Gray, Junior, down on the floor.

Sally was perfectly delighted to see her brother, and he was very glad to see her.

Meanwhile Elvira was getting something out of the pantry for them. She brought out two saucers of milk. It was very delicious, and when Oxford Gray, Junior, had finished his saucer, he came around to help Sally with hers. She gave him a slap with her paw, but it had no effect.

'It is my saucer of milk,' said Sally.

'You should lap faster! It is mine now,' he said.

'Aren't they dears?' said Elvira's friend, Miss Harvey, 'poor little things.'

'I like this one best, he shall be mine,' Elvira said, as she captured Oxford Gray, Junior, and held him in her arms. 'See how much he looks like his noble father, Oxford Gray?'

'Then this one shall be mine,' and Miss Harvey took the small Sally in her arms. 'The poor little thing looks thin and half-starved, but she is a dear little kitten with such a pretty face.'

At these words Sally felt very happy, for no one had said anything so kind to her since her mother died.

'Poor little orphan,' said Miss Harvey, 'I will be a second mother to you.'

Sally thought how cozy and sweet Miss Harvey looked, and Miss Harvey's big heart went out to the forlorn little creature in her arms. Suddenly Sally put her two paws around Miss Harvey's neck.

CHAPTER IV

THE KITTENS AND MISS WINIFRED

The next morning when Miss Winifred came into the kitchen, the kittens were in the clothes-basket which was under a table, so she did not see them. She was deciding what she would have for dinner, and at the sound of the word haddock, which Elvira suggested, the kittens became interested. It seemed that if one owned a house, all one had to do was to say what food one wanted. The kittens would have supposed it would be just the other way.

When the meals were all decided on, Elvira said, 'I had a present yesterday from Mrs. Conant.'

'How nice!' said Miss Winifred, who was very fond of her young neighbor. 'I am sure it was something you wanted.'

'Yes,' said Elvira, 'she could not have given me anything I would have liked better.'

'Aren't you going to show it to me?'

'You must have three guesses first.'

'I think it is an apron,' said Miss Winifred.

'No, it is something with more warmth in it than an apron.'

'It must be a sweater.'

'No, it is warmer still.'

'It isn't the right season for a fur neck-piece,' said Miss Winifred.

'It is made of fur, though,' said Elvira, and she picked up Oxford Gray, Junior, and held him before Miss Winifred's astonished eyes. 'Isn't he the living image of his father, Oxford Gray?' she asked.

Now, Miss Winifred's heart softened the moment she saw Oxford Gray, Junior, but she had determined not to have another cat, so she tried to look stern.

'I never did like a tiger kitten with white feet so well as an all tiger cat. Sam used to look like a miniature tiger in the jungle,' and at the memory of Sam, Miss Winifred looked sad, for this pet of Elvira's had found his way to her heart. 'He will

always have dirty feet, just as his father had.' She put on her eye-glasses so as to see him better. 'I don't think you are so very much to look at,' she said, hardening her heart.

Oxford Gray, Junior's, feelings were deeply hurt.

'I have said I never wanted another cat,' Miss Winifred added.

'I never expected he would be yours,' said Elvira; 'of course it's your house, but you wouldn't want to be alone in it.'

At this Miss Winifred laughed merrily and her glasses tumbled off.

'Of course, we'll have to keep the kitten for two or three days until he has had a few meals and then we can take him to the Ellen Gifford Home; they find such good places for cats.'

'I don't think they could find a better home than this,' said Elvira.

'We might find a home for him where the mistress is just longing for a cat,' said Miss Winifred.

'There is another one,' said Elvira, and she took the frightened Sally out of the clothes-basket. 'You would not have the heart to separate a brother and sister.'

Sally jumped out of Elvira's hands and took refuge under a table. If Miss Winifred could make such unkind remarks about the appearance of her handsome brother, what would she say when she saw her!

But you never could foresee what Miss Winifred

would do. As soon as she saw thin little Sally with her pitiful expression, her heart was touched.

'Poor little thing,' she said. 'We must certainly feed her up before we take her to the Home. We can get Mrs. Conant to run us up there in her car, just before Elvira and I start for New Hampshire, Miss Harvey, so that you will not have to be bothered with the care of two little kittens while we are gone.'

The kittens liked their new home, and they hoped very much that they would not be sent away, for surely no one could be kinder than Elvira and Miss Harvey.

They were always running around the kitchen whenever Miss Winifred went there, and, as she was very near-sighted, she once stepped on Sally's tail.

Sally and Oxford Gray, Junior, talked the matter over.

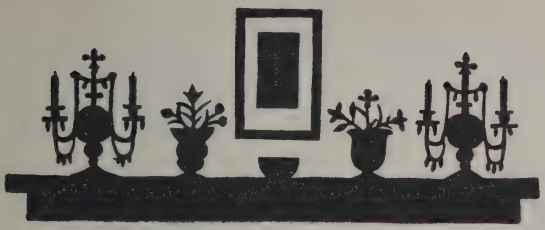
'Her feet seem always getting in our way,' said Sally.

'I am glad she is going to New Hampshire,' said Oxford Gray, Junior. 'We'll have a little peace, but I wish Elvira wasn't going with her.'

They were glad, on the whole, that no one could understand their language, although it would be convenient at times to be understood.

Elvira was somewhat troubled by them, but she loved them too well to think of parting with them, and soon, when they had grown used to their new home, it would be safe to let them out-of-doors again.

By the time Miss Winifred and Elvira came back from New Hampshire, Miss Harvey and the kittens had become such firm friends that nothing more was said about sending them to the Ellen Gifford Home.



CHAPTER V

THE FRIENDLY HOUSE

Sally was sure she liked houses. She liked the house where her new friends lived from the very start. A corner under a piazza where the rain could come through the cracks in the boards overhead had never seemed her idea of what a home should be, nor did she care to spend most of her time out-of-doors looking for food which was hard to find. So she settled down quite contentedly, and it did not trouble her that, while Elvira and Miss Winifred were in New Hampshire, Miss Harvey kept her and Oxford Gray, Junior, in the house. She always spoke of the three ladies in the following order, Miss Harvey, Elvira, and Miss Winifred. Her brother told her that she should speak of Miss Winifred first because she was the oldest and the owner

of the house, and of Miss Harvey next, and Elvira last, because she was the youngest of the three, but Sally persisted in her own way.

'I love Miss Harvey best, so I speak of her first, and I love Miss Winifred less than the others, so she comes last.'

It was not until Elvira and Miss Winifred had been at home some days that Miss Harvey said to

Sally one morning, 'You are such a good little kitten, I am going to let you through into the other part of the house while I am dusting the rooms.'

Sally had always wondered what was on the other side of the door. She had heard from her father that the rooms were large and that there were many pictures of Miss Winifred's ancestors hanging on the walls. He had told her there was a portrait of Miss Winifred's mother over the mantelpiece in the hall. Sally had never seen a picture, and so she looked at them with great interest. So that little

girl in a fur cape was Miss Winifred's mother! How odd it seemed that a lady so old herself had had a mother who was once a little girl! There were other portraits in the parlor and dining-room, all pictures of Miss Winifred's relations, she was sure.

She looked in vain for any pictures of her own ancestors. Surely so many Furbush-Tailbys had lived in the house, she should think Miss Winifred would have framed portraits of them hanging on the walls. Her great-great-grandmother, Martha Furbush-Tailby, would have made a nice picture, and her great-grandfather, William Furbush-Tailby, the poet, would certainly have been an ornament to the walls. And these relations of Miss Mann's looked so queer in their old-fashioned clothes, while her own ancestors would have looked as much up-to-date as Oxford Gray, Junior, himself, for she had been told they all had the gray tiger markings and broad white shirt-fronts like himself, and every one of them had white feet. And so far as tails were concerned, they were all noted for the fine tiger markings; she herself was proud of her tail. Yes, it would have made the sober green walls of the parlor

far pleasanter to look at if there had been portraits there of her ancestors.

At last she saw a picture with a house and church in the distance, and there, walking on the grass in the foreground, were two ladies, and a little boy, and a dog. Here at last was an animal. The ladies wore long skirts that trailed on the grass and bonnets that hid their faces, and the little boy wore odd clothes, too, but the dog looked exactly like one that Sally had met in the Wild Wood and scampered away from.

'Yes,' said Sally, 'it only shows how sensible and superior animals are, to be so made that they never have to change with the fashion.'

There was another room that was filled with books. It had a desk in it and Miss Winifred's typewriter, and a sofa that looked as if it would be a pleasant place for a kitten to take a nap. There were window-seats, too. The sun was pouring in on them. Sally jumped up on one and settled down. The sun felt warm and pleasant on her back.

'It is a friendly house,' said Sally. 'I like it, but some of the pictures would look so much nicer with

kittens in them. The little girl with the fur over her shoulders would look much sweeter if she had a kitten in her arms. I am sure she would have loved a nice, furry kitten.'

There was a mantelpiece in this room that Sally longed to explore, for there were candelabra on it, one at either end with two candles in each of them and dangling metal things hanging down from them that Sally longed to play with. She knew they could swing, for she saw Miss Harvey dusting them, so while Miss Harvey was dusting the table, she jumped up on the mantelpiece by way of the sofa and began to play with them.

When she went back into the kitchen, she told Oxford Gray, Junior, about the charms of the friendly house. He was greatly interested when he heard of the mantelpiece with the candlesticks with the swinging pendants.

'I think maybe Miss Harvey wouldn't like you to touch them,' said Sally.

'Miss Harvey!' He spoke a little contemptuously. 'Why should I do any more harm than you?'

So the kittens watched their chance, and one day they slipped through the door that was left partly open so that Miss Harvey could hear the telephone in the other part of the house.

Oxford Gray, Junior, hardly paused to look at anything in the other rooms. He did not care for the portraits of Miss Winifred's ancestors.

'They all have on such old-fashioned clothes,' he said. 'Our ancestors would look much more up-to-date.'

'That is what I thought myself,' said Sally.

Oxford and Sally went into the library where the candelabra stood on the mantelpiece.

'There'll be a candlestick for each of us to play with,' said Sally.

Oxford thought it would be exciting to get to the mantelpiece ahead of Sally, and Sally wanted to get there first, so they had a mad race to the sofa and then they gave a jump that landed them on the mantelpiece. Alas! the mantelpiece was not wide enough for the pair of them, and the first thing they knew was that they had knocked one of the candlesticks off the mantelpiece and had tumbled off

themselves and were lying on the floor with the ruins of the broken wax candles.

The kittens were very much frightened. Sally rushed under the sofa and Oxford Gray, Junior, took refuge under a chair.

Elvira, who was in the kitchen, heard the noise, and came in to see what had happened. They heard her step in the hall.

'If we are very quiet,' said Sally, in her thought-transference language, 'Elvira will never find us. She'll think the candlestick just fell off of itself.'

'For mercy sakes!' said Elvira, as she saw the broken candles on the floor. 'You little rascal, what have you been doing?' and she fixed her eyes on Oxford Gray, Junior. 'I suppose Sally is somewhere about. Oh, yes! there she is under the sofa.'

'It wasn't our fault,' said Oxford. 'It is just the fault of that old mantelpiece — it's too narrow. Miss Winifred ought to have made her house more convenient for kittens.'

But, alas! Elvira couldn't understand his language.

CHAPTER VI

SALLY AND THE CLOCK

WHAT Sally missed more than anything in her restricted life in the house was trees. There was something that was called a hat-tree in the hall, but it was a poor thing with no branches and merely a series of pegs, on which some garments hung at times. And in the parlor there was a very tall tree that Miss Harvey called a palm, that was no good for climbing purposes, because it was so slimsy. Sally could not see why Miss Winifred did not have an oak tree instead, for there were plenty of them around the Wild Wood and one of them would never be missed. If there had never been cats living here before, Sally could have understood it, but there had been so many living here. Her great-

great-grandmother, Martha Furbush-Tailby, had lived here, and her great-grandfather, William Furbush-Tailby, had been born in the house. She should have supposed Miss Winifred would have wanted to make things comfortable for them.

Sally and Oxford Gray, Junior, took to climbing Elvira and Miss Harvey as a substitute for trees. They preferred Elvira when she was in a friendly mood because she was so much taller, but she occasionally made disrespectful remarks, and said such words as 'You little rascals, you little villains, you've torn my apron.' Miss Harvey, on the other hand, seemed to understand, and not to mind the sudden surprise of a kitten running up her dress and landing on her shoulder and then pulling a comb out of her hair.

'The poor little dears, they have no trees to climb,' she would say. 'They'll be all right as soon as they are so used to the house that they will not run away if we let them out.'

There was another thing Sally could not understand. It did not seem at all reasonable to her that on cold days in June, when the house felt damp,

there was no fire in the furnace. She had learned that the registers were places where heat came up in the winter. But why not have a furnace fire in summer when it was cold? Certainly cats could run a house much better than people if they had the chance.

Although Miss Winifred had not been thoughtful enough to make mantelpieces wide enough for two kittens to walk there together, Sally did not by any means give up her desire to explore such delightful walks. In the kitchen the clock on a small shelf had a pointed roof and that in the dining-room had an ornament on top of it, but the parlor clock had a flat roof, so to speak, and Sally was sure it would be a grand place to sit and see the world from a high place, just as people saw it, for the top of the clock was only a little lower than Miss Harvey's head. There were no candlesticks on this mantelpiece and the small ornaments were so placed as to leave plenty of room for a cat. There were two routes to the desired spot, one was by a low bookcase which could be reached by a chair, and the other, by the way of the piano. This Sally decided would be the

best, for one of her favorite seats was the piano, which could be easily reached by a chair.

Miss Harvey was reading aloud to Miss Winifred at the time. She had found that Sally was such a good kitten and stepped so daintily that she let her go wherever she liked. So she climbed from a chair to the piano and then gave a leap to the mantelpiece, and then she got up on top of the clock. She found it a comfortable seat, and it was fine to be so high up, for she could look down on the heads of dear Miss Harvey and Miss Winifred, who really wasn't a bad sort, except for her feet that were always getting in one's way. The room looked very different now she was so high up. This must be the way it looked to people, with the rug very far off and no one noticing the table legs. She was in no hurry to get down from her high perch, so she sat there a long time washing her face.

'Look at Sally!' said Miss Harvey.

Miss Winifred put on her glasses.

Just then a singular thing happened that gave Sally a scare. Something inside the clock went off. She had heard clocks strike before, of course, but

never when she was so near. It was the loudest thing she had ever heard. 'One, two, three' — by this time the frightened Sally was off the clock and on the mantelpiece, preparing to give a flying leap to the piano, but her curiosity overcame her fear, and she looked behind the clock to see if she could find out where the noise came from. 'Four, five, six' — by this time she was on the piano again. Would the thing never stop? Had she set something going by being on top of it? 'Seven, eight.' That was all. She hoped she had not ruined it. But of one thing she was sure. She would never try to view the world again from the top of the parlor clock.

CHAPTER VII

THE CATNIP MOUSE

THERE is a first time for everything, whether one is a little girl, or a boy, or a kitten. For a little girl, there is her first doll, and later her first pretty doll with real hair and blue eyes that will open and shut. For a boy there is his first ball, and his first set of marbles; but if you are a kitten, greater than all of these joys put together is the thrill that comes when you have your first catnip mouse.

Oxford Gray, Junior, and Sally could measure their young lives by months instead of weeks before this exciting event occurred. They had heard there were such things, for there had been a tradition in the family of a glorious catnip mouse that had belonged to their ancestress, Martha Furbush-

Tailby. But it is one thing to hear about a catnip mouse and quite another to have it for one's very own plaything.

Cool days and nights had come. It was the autumn, and all things furry were seeking snug quarters for the winter. The kittens were glad that they had their cozy kitchen to live in. Oxford Gray, Junior, however, sometimes went off on an excursion for hours, but Sally kept pretty closely to the house. And besides cats and kittens, there were others that sought winter quarters.

'There seem to be a lot of mice about,' Miss Winifred had said to Elvira. 'I hear them in the wall.'

'I can do a good deal for you, Miss Winifred,' said Elvira, 'but catching mice is not in my line.'

Miss Winifred laughed. 'I should think some of your followers might do it for you,' she said, and she looked at Oxford Gray, Junior.

Although Oxford Gray, Junior, did not care much for the owner of the house, this put him on his mettle, and the very next night he caught his first

mouse. The praise given him was so great that he caught three others within a week.

It was then that Miss Winifred said to Elvira, 'I wonder if the kittens are not old enough to like a catnip mouse?'

'Old enough?' said Elvira. 'I have been thinking for weeks they ought to have one, but I have been out very little it has stormed so much.'

'A catnip mouse!' The kittens were entranced at the idea. They could hardly wait for the time to come when they could have one for their very own.

It was late one November afternoon when Elvira came into the house after a trip to Boston. She had hardly got inside the door before the kittens noticed a peculiar and very delicious smell. It seemed to them to be sweeter than the odor of roses and violets and mignonette and sweet peas. They looked at each other in glad surprise.

'I am sure she has brought us a catnip mouse,' said Sally.

She got up on the kitchen table and sniffed at Elvira's bag.

'Yes, you witch,' said Elvira. 'It is a catnip

mouse all right, but you must be patient and wait until I get my things off.'

Learning that it really was a catnip mouse, Oxford Gray, Junior, jumped up on the table and joined his sister. She was sitting there patiently, but Oxford Gray, Junior, began to claw at the bag to try to get at the catnip mouse.

'You are a bad kitten,' said Elvira, taking her bag away. 'You don't deserve the catnip mouse. Why can't you behave well like your sister?'

'It was I that caught all those mice. Sally could never catch a mouse to save her life,' said Oxford Gray, Junior.

'I could, too, and I will some day,' said Sally.

But even the intelligent Elvira did not seem to understand what was being said.

Elvira undid her bag and flung something down on the floor. It was the catnip mouse. It was shaped like a real mouse, and was full of catnip. Oxford and Sally ran toward it. Sally had it in her mouth and Oxford knocked it with his paw. Sally dropped it and Oxford tried to capture it. And then to their surprise, another of the wonderful things

fell to the floor. There were two of them! Two catnip mice — one for each of them! Who but Elvira would have thought of bringing home two catnip mice. Oxford took his mouse and ran under the table to enjoy it by himself, and Sally went under a chair with hers. The mice were so marvelous the kittens were afraid that some one would take them away after a short time.

Such thoughts they had as they inhaled the delicious scent. Oxford came out into the room at last and threw his mouse up into the air. It fell lightly to the ground. Then Sally came out with her mouse and threw it up into the air. They were so excited and overstimulated that they began to break into verse.

Elvira, Elvira, how we admire her!
We give her warmest praise.
She must sometime have been a cat,
We both are very sure of that,
A cat who lived in prehistoric days.
Elvira, Elvira, how we admire her!

It seemed almost as if Elvira had understood, for she said to Miss Harvey, 'See how excited the

kittens are. It reminds me of Martha Furbush-Tailby's first catnip mouse and her verses.'

Sweet are the lessons of adversity,
  At least so people say;
But sweeter is prosperity,
  I've learned that much to-day.

For when the catnip mouse is new
  And full of catnip strength,
The hours fly by on shining wings
  Not measured by their length.

If I were asked what I would like
  To beautify my house,
I'd say without a moment's thought,
  'Give me a catnip mouse.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST SNOWSTORM

SALLY sat at the window watching her first snowstorm. She was entranced by the way the flakes fell. They came down so softly, flying through the air like tiny white butterflies, and when they reached the earth, they all joined together in a wonderful white blanket.

'Oxford,' she said, 'isn't this a beautiful world? Doesn't it seem as if millions of tiny white butterflies were coming down to cover the earth with a white blanket?'

'It looks more like powder to me, or rice,' said Oxford. 'I don't see anything pretty about it. It's just frozen rain.'

It was when her brother said things like this

that Sally longed to have children who might perhaps be like her and understand how truly beautiful this wonderful world is. She did so wish that her great-grandfather was alive, for she was sure he would be a satisfying companion. He was a poet,

and Elvira had sometimes read some of his verses aloud. They had been published in a book, and there were others that had never been printed. She longed to ask Elvira if her great-grandfather, William Furbush-Tailby, had ever written a poem about a snowstorm, but, although Elvira was unusually intelligent, for a person, Sally could not always make her thought-transference language

understood. This time, however, it seemed to work, for Elvira took a book with writing in it out of a drawer in the cupboard and she said to Miss Harvey, 'Did I ever read you Billy Furbush-Tailby's poem on "The First Snowstorm of the Season"?'

Sally pricked up her ears, but Oxford Gray, Junior, went off to sleep, for verses bored him.

They fall so softly from the sky,
  All coming down together;
Why did they leave the regions high
  To give us stormy weather?

Did they take pity on the earth
  That looked so bare and brown,
As if it needed a new birth,
  And so came fluttering down?

Did they remember children small,
  Who longed to slide and coast,
And so came down with a great fall
  In a glad, joyous host?

I watch the people as they pass
  And snowflakes as they fall,
I watch the puddle that's like glass,
  I'm glad that I am small.

For it is cozy in the house,
  Beside the kitchen stove,
Watching to get a gliding mouse
  While my three brothers rove,

And scamper through the falling flakes,
  No thought of verse have they,
While kind Elvira brews and bakes,
  Upon this snowy day,

Dishes that cats and kittens love,
  They are a pleasant sight;
I let my brothers freely rove,
  I stay at home and write.

Sally was much impressed by the verses of her ancestor. She wished he were here now, sitting by her on the window-sill, for Oxford Gray, Junior, was so tiresome at times. 'Rice, indeed, or powder!' What a way to speak of these marvelous fluttering things that came down to earth from another country as if bringing a message of peace and good will!

There was a great deal to be seen from the windows of the house. Sally went at an early hour to the window in the hall and sat on the broad leather cushion looking out. Miss Harvey had let her come

through when she went in to dust the parlor. Sally was greatly interested in watching Mr. Gardiner shovel out the board walk with his big wooden shovel. It seemed a foolish piece of work to her, for no sooner had he shoveled off the snow than more came. 'Why not wait until the snowstorm was over?' thought Sally. But people were so stupid compared with cats!

Mr. Gardiner looked cold and tired, and as if he would like to take Sally's advice. He kept on working though, and the snowflakes kept on falling. It was too bad that they would not let Oxford into this part of the house, but ever since the candlestick had been knocked off the study mantelpiece, they seemed to feel one cat inside was enough. They had given him one or two more trials when there was a mouse inside, but he had clawed a sofa cushion, and scratched a piano leg, when sharpening his claws. If he had only behaved well, he could have been sitting on this green cushion watching the snowstorm, for there were three windows and he could have had one to himself. Mr. Gardiner spied Sally in the window and he made a low bow.

'He has the best manners of any man I ever saw,' Sally thought. 'Men usually do not stop to be polite to cats.'

Miss Harvey was standing in the hall just behind Sally, but Sally was sure the bow had been meant for herself.

When Sally went back into the kitchen, she found there was much more to be seen there, for Elvira had thrown out some food for the birds, and there were sparrows and grackles and pigeons picking up the crumbs. There was some suet hanging on the branch of a pine tree and a bird was feeding on it, swinging back and forth. Sally looked across at the opposite house, and she saw Mrs. Conant in a storm-coat and hat coming over to the plank walk. Perhaps this was why Mr. Gardiner had been shoveling the snow off the plank walk so as to make it easier for people to walk there.

Oxford was sitting at one of the kitchen windows, and Sally was in the other. Mrs. Conant waved to them and to Elvira as she passed. Here was another polite person.

The most exciting of all the windows was the bow window in the dining-room at three o'clock in the afternoon. Sally had gone there for a change and to have a little peace, for Oxford was in a trying mood. Elvira came into the room with a plateful of crumbled-up bread in her hand and opened the window. Sally looked out and saw a dozen pheas-

ants coming forward to get the bread. They all had sober feathers except one bird, the pheasant cock, Elvira called him. He had a beautiful white ring around his neck and a glorious long tail.

'It is not so fine a tail as mine,' said Sally, for her long tail with its tiger markings was her chief beauty, and was often remarked on. 'But he has the best tail I have ever seen on a bird.'

Presently a cat came up stealthily, and the pheasants took instant flight. The cat looked cold and hungry, and Sally thought how fortunate she was to be in a warm house herself. The kittens had very little milk for supper, for the storm was such a bad one that the milkman had not come.

'We can get along without milk better than Sally and Oxford can, for they would not understand,' Elvira said to Miss Harvey as she put the last milk in the pitcher into the kittens' saucers.

'We understand perfectly well,' Sally said. 'We are not such fools as you take us for. We can understand all that you say, and you never can understand us.'

It was snowing when Sally and Oxford gave a last

look out of the window before they settled down for the night, but in the morning all was changed, and when the sun rose, the whole world was like fairy-land, for the branches were all glistening in the sun, as if they were made of glass. The kittens went out for a stroll and met Mrs. Conant and her husband. They kept sinking down through the crust, but Sally and Oxford were so light they could walk on it with ease. Mrs. Conant was wearing a beautiful fur coat.

'It is almost as good-looking as mine,' thought Sally, 'but it must be hard to be so big that one can't walk on the crust. In winter I'd much rather be a cat.'

CHAPTER IX

BUSY SALLY

SALLY was a very busy cat, and she always gave her whole attention to whatever she was doing, whether it was sitting on her register, or washing her face, or helping Miss Harvey make the beds. Indeed, Miss Harvey often would say, 'Sally, you are like the little busy bee,' and she would repeat a part of the poem. Sally had her own opinion of the little busy bee, and she did not especially like to be told she was like him, for she had been stung by a bee on one occasion. Who could have suspected that anything so small could hurt one so much? And then where was he in winter? Certainly not gathering honey from every opening flower. She suspected he was in snug quarters resting and leading an idle life, while she was busy all the year around. First

there was the delicious breakfast that Miss Harvey gave Oxford and herself, of warm milk and oatmeal, and then she spent a great deal of time washing herself. And she had to help Oxford, for he could not wash behind his ears, and then he would wash behind Sally's ears to help her out. And it took a good deal of time to manicure her nails.

But where she felt she was of the greatest use was in helping Miss Harvey with the beds, for dear Miss Harvey might have been lonely without her. Did she not often say, 'You are my little comfort'? To be sure she sometimes said, 'Troublesome comfort,' but it was a great deal to be any comfort. Sally never heard Miss Harvey call any one else in the house a comfort, not even Oxford, who deserved such words, for he was ridding the house of mice. So Miss Harvey and Sally would go upstairs to make the beds; as soon as Miss Harvey had turned back the mattress and put on a sheet, Sally would jump on the bed and knead the sheet with her paws. But she liked to get on the blankets much the best, they were so soft and woolly, and sometimes after patticaking them well and going around

in a circle as if she were making a bed for herself in the Wild Wood, she would curl herself up in a ball and settle down for a nap. It was then that Miss Harvey would call her a troublesome comfort and gently take her off and put her on a chair. But Sally would be back again and on the spread.

One of Sally's most interesting occupations was looking out of the windows. There was so much to be seen even in winter, but when the spring came and there was a faint green fuzz on the trees, and the birds came back from the South and began to sing, and Sally could sun herself out-of-doors, she was busier than ever.

At this time of year the nights were more interesting than the days, and she was only sorry that her dear Miss Harvey did not agree with her as to how a night should be spent. Miss Harvey seemed to think that all cats ought to be in bed at a certain hour, like people, whereas every cat knows that so much goes on at night one hates to miss that it is hard to be forced to stay in the house. Sally spent a great deal of time sleeping by day. That was the sensible way. To race about until one was tired and

then take a long nap. And these naps could be taken at noon when it was too hot to be out-of-doors. But even though Sally was closed in at night, there was a great deal going on which she could enjoy. There were concerts given by her cat friends, and

there was the wonderful moonlight that made it so bright out-of-doors, and there was the excitement of the sound of the scurrying of small feet through the walls and the thought that perhaps one could catch another mouse. She agreed with her ancestress, Martha Furbush-Tailby, about these things, and liked her verses on the subject.

How can one ever sleep at night,
When mice are scampering through the walls,
And other cats long for a fight,
And give their piercing, shrill cat-calls?
How can one ever sleep at night,
When the great moon is round and bright?

Long naps by day, I like that best.
When the great sun is hot and bright,
That seems the time to take a rest,
After a long and strenuous night.
It would be strange to live by rule,
As children do who go to school.

Sometimes Sally would go into the room where all the books were, and Miss Winifred had her writing-desk and her typewriter. Sally would sit patiently by her mouse-hole and Miss Winifred would sit by her typewriter with her hands in her lap, for it sometimes seemed to be as hard to catch ideas as to catch a mouse, and then suddenly Miss Winifred's fingers would fly over the keys and the black writing would come out on the paper. Sally had many ideas herself, in fact she was never at a loss for them. She wished she could write on the typewriter, and once, when Miss Winifred had left it

uncovered with a sheet of paper in it, she had walked over the keys, but she could not make it write. She wanted to write a letter to dear Miss Harvey to tell her how she loved her. Of course Miss Harvey must know in part how she felt, for she so often put her paws around her neck and pressed her face against hers, but a letter could tell more.

So one day when Miss Winifred had left a sheet of typewriting paper on her desk, Sally skipped onto it. She looked down and saw that the marks of her paws were plainly to be seen. This was what the footprints said:

Dear Miss Harvey:

I love you best of all the people in the house. In some ways you are dearer than Oxford, although I could not get along without my splendid twin brother, but you make me think of my own dear mother, for you are so cozy and so kind. Of course she did not look like you, for she was just a small cat like myself. I mean you are like her in disposition. It is Sally Gray writing this. It is the first

letter I ever wrote. I just had to thank you for all your kindness. Elvira is nice, too, but not as gentle as you are, and Miss Winifred doesn't mean to step on my tail, only you never step on it, not even by accident, so some people are more thoughtful than others.

Your own most loving

Sally

She heard Miss Winifred coming and jumped down on the floor. Miss Winifred took up the sheet of paper and was about to put it into the typewriter.

'Don't,' Sally pleaded in her thought-transference language. 'That is my letter to Miss Harvey, the first I ever wrote.'

But Miss Winifred could not understand. She looked at the paper a little more closely with her near-sighted eyes.

'Goodness, you little witch,' she said, 'you have walked all over my sheet.'

Sally saw that she was about to put it into the waste-paper basket.

'It is my letter,' Sally repeated in her own language. How she wished she had human speech! But this time it really seemed as if Miss Winifred understood, for she called to Miss Harvey, who was setting the table in the dining-room.

'Come here a minute and see what Sally has done,' she said as she held up the sheet. 'See Sally's paw-marks all over the paper. I think she must have been writing a love-letter to you.'

Sally never knew whether Miss Harvey could read what she had written, but, after all, it did not make much difference whether or not she could make out the actual words, for she seemed so pleased to have it.

'Dear little Sally,' she said, and she stopped to stroke the pussy in passing her. 'So you thought you would write a letter? I must show it to Elvira.'

CHAPTER X

MOODS

SALLY was a cat with moods. When she was well and busy, she was a happy kitten, but if there was the least thing wrong with her, she felt very forlorn. It was at these times that she thought of her dear mother and lamented her loss, for even dear Miss Harvey, who understood so well the feelings of a cat, could not quite make up for a furry mother who would put her paw about her and wash her when she was too tired to do it for herself. Oxford was not of much use as a sympathizer, and yet Sally always had the hope that he would be.

So one hot summer day, when Sally felt very unhappy and as if she were of no use to any one, she spoke to Oxford of her feelings.

'I feel as if I were a perfectly useless cat,' she said. 'You can do so much for the family.'

The kittens were in the shade of the oak tree near the front door. It was a delightful spot, for they could have a view of the path, and see any one who went up or down it. Then, too, if any one came to the door, like the postman, they could take the chance to slip into the house, without bothering to go around to the back door.

Oxford made no reply.

Suddenly Sally remembered something she had heard in a sermon that Elvira was reading out of a newspaper. The preacher had said that the best way to forget one's own troubles was to do something for some one else.

'Oxford, wouldn't you like me to wash around your ears?' she said.

'Oh, bother, no,' said Oxford.

'I feel so blue to-day,' she said. 'I thought maybe if I did something useful like washing your ears I'd feel better.'

'There's no use in doing something useful that nobody wants you to do,' said he.

Sally hoped he would add, 'My poor little sister, I am so sorry you are blue,' but instead of that he said, 'Sally, you have been eating too many grasshoppers.'

Sally was pretty sure this was the case, but she had hoped Oxford would not have thought of it.

'Grasshoppers are so alluring,' said Sally. She had picked up this word from one of Miss Winifred's callers who was speaking of the moving pictures. It certainly applied to grasshoppers which were so constantly on the move.

'You see,' Sally went on, 'they are hard to catch, and if you do catch a grasshopper, there doesn't seem any point in letting it go.'

'You could give them to me,' said Oxford.

'But you get more than I do.'

'Yes, that is true. But they never upset me and make me blue. If they affected my spirits, I should cut down on grasshoppers.'

Sally knew this would have been the case. She admired her brother's strength of character.

Just then Sally saw her friend, Mrs. Conant, go-

ing down the path with some letters to mail. She stopped to speak to the kittens.

'Well, you do know how to make yourselves comfortable,' she said as she passed. She had on one of the pretty pink-and-white dresses that Sally liked so much, and in her present mood she thought how nice it would be to be a pretty young lady whom every one loved, with a thin cool dress on instead of fur.

Although Oxford did not express his affection, he was very fond of his little sister, and he wanted to help her. But he could not resist saying, 'Sally, you ought to learn to brace up.' He quickly added, 'Suppose we play with our catnip mice for a change? Maybe the catnip will brace you up.'

They saw Miss Winifred and a friend coming up the path. This meant a fine chance to get into the house, so the kittens went up the steps and stood before the front door.

'Dear me!' said Miss Winifred, 'I wonder how long you have been waiting here.' She took out her latch-key and, as she opened the door, the kittens slipped in ahead of her. They ran along to the door

that led to the kitchen. Miss Winifred followed them and, as it was dark in that corner, she stooped down to see if the kittens were there. Yes, she felt two furry backs, they were patiently waiting for her to open the door.

Once in the kitchen, Oxford gave a leap from a chair to the small shelf on which the clock stood, for on it were the catnip mice. He knocked off first one and then the other.

'Bless your heart,' said Elvira, as she looked at Sally. 'You look a little peaked to-day. Too many grasshoppers, I fear.'

Miss Harvey came into the kitchen just then and Sally got into her lap and put her two paws around her neck, for she wanted a little petting. There are times when this is even more comforting than catnip.

'My poor little Sally,' said Miss Harvey, as she stroked the pussy. 'My poor, dear, little Sally. Did she feel as if she wanted some one to pet her? I understand, dear, just how you feel.'

Miss Harvey was tactful enough not to refer to the grasshoppers.

Oxford was already playing with his catnip mouse, tossing it high in the air and running to sniff it where it fell. Suddenly Sally scrambled down from Miss Harvey's lap and flew toward Oxford's mouse, seizing it before his astonished eyes.

'Silly kittens,' said Elvira. 'There are two mice, you can each have one,' and she picked up the other mouse and threw it on the floor. Then they both ran to get that mouse. Sally had it in her mouth and Oxford knocked it out.

'Oh, if that is your game, all right,' said Elvira, who was an understanding person.

Sally felt much refreshed after half an hour spent with the catnip mice, and as usually happened after a time with this stimulating plaything, she felt like talking in verse instead of prose. Even Oxford felt like answering back in rhyme. It was a fine game.

Sally: I'd like to be a lady fair,
All dressed in silks and fur,
With rosy lips and golden hair,
And speech, instead of purr.

My father'd give me a fur coat,
And on a summer day,

When on the waters I could float,
I'd put my coat away.

Were I in silk instead of fur,
How pleasant that would be,
Pink silk I'd choose, and, Oxford Gray,
You'd be so proud of me!

Oxford: Pink silk, indeed, you foolish maid,
Why can't you be content?
You're costumed for both sun and shade,
Nor does it cost a cent.

Sally, I'd hate the sight of you,
I like you as you are,
A modest kitten, sweet and true,
With eyes that see afar.

Sally: Well, Oxford, since I'm dear to you,
Thankful I ought to be,
For human brothers oft find fault
With sisters' fineree.

Perhaps the lady in her silk
And coat of costly fur,
Would sometimes like my bowl of milk,
If she could have my purr.

For cares, they say, must come with wealth,
And, Oxford, we are free

To roam the house at night, by stealth,
With mice for company.

To sleep all night, when mice are near,
Would seem a waste of time,
Than ladies I am surely freer,
For I can race and climb.

Oxford: Now, Sally, there's my own good cat,
A cat of parts and sense,
Your wits are sharp, I'm sure of that,
People are often dense.

Of all the creatures on this earth
The kitten's life is best,
I've always known this from my birth,
I pity all the rest.

The men I pity very much,
They cannot watch the ants,
And grasshoppers, and worms, and such,
In their accustomed haunts.

I'd hate to be so very tall,
A man I would not be,
It's easier if you are small,
To climb a chestnut tree.

My fur coat is a grand affair,
It did not cost a cent.

Moods

Were I a man and fur did wear,
  What hundreds would be spent!

The lesson surely seems to read,
  And it is very plain,
To make the most of what you are,
  With heart, and paws, and brain.

CHAPTER XI

PETER

SALLY and Oxford felt just alike about Peter. They could neither of them bear him. He was a fine-looking brown tiger cat with large stripes and a large white shirt-front and four white paws. He had once been a valued house-cat, but was now without a home. They suspected that Elvira sometimes gave him meals on their piazza, for they now felt the back porch belonged to them. When kittens have lived for more than a year and a half in a place and have grown into young cats, the place seems to belong to them, so Oxford stalked around as if he were a police-cat on duty, keeping out intruders.

'Of course the back yard is mine,' he said. 'Indeed, I feel that I own the place more than Miss Winifred does.'

'But her father left it to her,' Sally reminded him.

'I suppose she has a certain claim to it, but he never knew us,' said Oxford. 'I am sure he would have loved us if he had known us. Don't you remember the story that has come down to us, of how he held our great-grandfather, William Furbush-Tailby, on his knee? Anyway, we get a great deal more good out of the place than Miss Winifred. I have never seen her climb a tree, and we can climb one any time and get away from a dog, and she never goes into the Wild Wood, and she does not know all our little hiding-places, and she could not get into them, anyway.'

'I do feel as if we were more important,' said Sally. 'Many a time I've heard Elvira say, "I'll come to you in a few minutes, Miss Winifred, but Oxford has just come in. I must give him his supper, for he won't understand being kept waiting."'

But whoever the true owner of the house might be, it certainly did not belong to Peter, and Oxford had told him so on more than one occasion. He had chased him off the place several times, but Peter,

although he seemed gentle, was a persistent soul, and as he was fond of the bread and canned salmon that kind Elvira put out on the back piazza for him, he came back over and over again.

'If I ever really get my paw on him, I'll give him such a thrashing that he'll remember it all his life,' Oxford said to Sally.

Now it just darted through Sally's mind, that it might be the other way around, for Peter, although he was mild in his demeanor, was larger than Oxford, and at least two years older, but being wise beyond her months, she merely said, 'It will be grand, Oxford, if you can thrash him.'

'Of course I can,' said her brother, swelling with pride. 'Don't you remember the tradition about the first Furbush, Martha's ancestor, how he would get the better of every cat in a fight and earned the name of William the Conqueror?'

'Yes,' said Sally, 'I remember, but he was a full-grown cat.'

'I don't expect to get hurt, and it is certainly best to get rid of that vagabond at once, before Elvira gets fond of him.'

The fight came off one bright November day. Sally was looking out of the kitchen window, and Oxford was sunning himself in the back yard. There was a plate of canned salmon mixed with bread on the back piazza. That could not be for Oxford, for both he and she had grown so dainty that they liked stew meat and haddock better than canned salmon. Elvira must be leaving it out there for some cat. She saw Peter coming through a place in the fence that was made for small animals to get through. She hoped to attract Oxford's attention and ran around to the kitchen door, but it was closed. Jumping up on the window-sill again, she saw Peter quickly run up the steps and begin to taste the food. Oxford flew up the steps and began to fight Peter. He flew at Oxford and put his claws in his fur. Oxford grappled with him, and the two cats went rolling down the steps.

Sally, from her perch on the window-sill, saw that it was as she had feared. After a long fight, Peter went swiftly away in fine condition, while Oxford came haltingly up the steps with a lame paw — a sadder and a wiser cat. Although he respected

Peter more, his dislike of him increased, and he was determined to drive him off the place.

'If I had advised him not to fight, he wouldn't have liked it,' thought Sally. 'He would have just said, "Sally, you never do brace up."'

After this, Oxford and Sally saw no more of Peter for some weeks. Sometimes they saw a plate of canned salmon and bread on the back piazza and lay in wait for him, but Oxford never caught him. Twice they saw at dusk a shadowy form vanishing into the Wild Wood.

One evening there was a great snowstorm and Oxford had not come home. Miss Winifred seemed the most worried, and this was strange, as she had not wanted him in the beginning.

'Poor little pussy, hasn't he come back yet?' she asked Elvira after supper.

'No, Miss Winifred, and I've called until I'm hoarse.'

'It is a wild storm,' said Miss Winifred.

'I am sure Oxford is safe and warm somewhere,' said Elvira; 'he's a cat who knows how to look out for himself.'

'Yes,' said Miss Harvey, 'if it was my little Sally, I should be terribly worried.'

Sally was sitting on Miss Harvey's knee at the time, and at these words she put her furry paws around her neck and rubbed her face against hers. 'I am sure he is all right,' she said in her cat language that people could not understand. 'He always comes back.'

'Of course he always has come back,' said Miss Winifred, as if she had understood, 'but there comes a time — some of your pets have gone away and never come back, Elvira.'

Then Sally thought of her grandmother and of her brave father, the mighty hunter, and of her mother, so cozy and so kind. How terrible it would be if Oxford should disappear as they had done!

'I will go and call him,' said Miss Winifred. 'Maybe he will come in for me.'

'For you?' said Elvira. 'You and he have never been great friends.'

Miss Winifred went to the front door and stepped into the piazza that was glassed in for winter. The storm was raging outside. She opened the glass

door of the piazza and the wind blew the snow into her face. It was deep on the steps.

'Oxford Gray, Oxford Gray, Oxford Gray, Junior!' she called. 'Darling pussy, do come!'

She had never called him 'darling pussy' before, but our friends grow very dear to us if we fear losing them.

'Oxford, Oxford Gray, Junior!' she called again.

Something furry brushed against her feet. She stooped and patted the fur coat all crusted over with snow.

'How friendly you are! You were never so friendly before. Walk in, darling pussy,' she said, as she opened the hall door.

The hungry and cold cat rubbed against her feet once more as if in gratitude. She walked along the front hall to the door at the back that led into the kitchen.

'Here he is! Here is Oxford Gray, Junior, himself,' she said. 'He came for me. He knew my voice.'

Elvira was greatly surprised. 'He just happened to come along at that time,' she said; then, as she started to brush the casing of snow from the cat,

she said, 'This isn't Oxford Gray, Junior. This is Peter.'

'Peter!' gasped Miss Winifred. 'Who on earth is Peter?'

'Somebody's house-cat; somebody's pet that has been left to make his own way in the world.'

'How did he happen to come here? Is he one of your friends who takes his meals at your cafeteria on the piazza?'

'He's had a few meals,' Elvira admitted. 'And he will have as many more as he likes. I'd rather spend my money feeding cats than going to the movies. It's more amusing to me.'

'Of course we must keep him for the night,' said Miss Winifred, 'and he must have a good meal, but I really can't keep him permanently, Elvira; two cats are quite enough.'

'Oxford agrees with you,' said Elvira. 'You'll have no trouble once he gets home.'

The next morning the sun shone, and Oxford came back as unconcernedly as if he had caused no anxiety. No one knew his adventures except Sally, but he looked so prosperous and seemed so little to

desire food that the family were sure he had been housed somewhere.

As he went out for a stroll later in the morning, he met Peter coming out of the cellar door.

'What have you been doing in my house?' he demanded sternly.

For once the silent Peter found his tongue. 'It is my house now,' he said proudly. 'Miss Winifred asked me in herself.'

'She didn't!' Oxford exclaimed.

'She did! She said, "Walk in, darling pussy," so I walked in.'

CHAPTER XII

SALLY AND THE LOUD SPEAKER

Sally spent a great deal of time in the parlor. In the morning she often had it to herself, for Miss Winifred was usually out of the house, or writing on her typewriter. 'The parlor is mine in the morning,' she told Oxford.

'You can go into your old parlor all you like,' said he. 'I like my kitchen best.'

Sally suspected that his scorn of the parlor came because he was not allowed to go into it, as he was not as quiet and well-behaved as Sally.

In the evening Miss Harvey often sat there reading the newspaper to Miss Winifred. Sally was often bored by the newspaper, and she would get up in Miss Harvey's lap and sit on it so that she could

not read. Miss Harvey would say in her gentle voice, 'Come, Sally, please get off my paper.'

Sally would pretend that she did not understand, and she would put her furry paws around Miss Harvey's neck and press her furry face against her cheek.

'Sally, you are a nuisance,' were the unkindest words Miss Harvey ever said, and Sally would once more pretend she did not understand. Sometimes Miss Harvey would stop reading if it was almost bedtime; Sally always hoped this would happen, and sometimes she would gently put Sally on the center table, where she would settle for a nap in the friendly warmth of the electric lamp.

Once in a great while there would be an interesting piece of news in the paper. Once she heard something about the President's pets, and there was a wonderful occasion when there was something worth while in the paper and Sally learned that the President's wife was fond of pets, and that once, before she was in the White House, she had found a mouse-hole in the room she was in, in some hotel, and had trained the mice and given them food. Sally's eyes fairly glistened. What a pity that

she had not been near that mouse-hole herself! It would have been so easy to catch a tame mouse, and if she caught one, Oxford could never be so scornful again.

Sometimes Miss Harvey would put down the paper and she and Miss Winifred would have a friendly chat, and it was at one of these times that Sally learned the piece of news she told Oxford the next day as she and Oxford were sunning themselves on the back porch after an exhausting morning of exercise.

'I hear that Miss Winifred is going to have a loud speaker,' she said.

'I am sorry to hear it,' said he; 'there are enough loud speakers around the house as it is. I have sensitive ears.'

'Miss Harvey has a sweet voice,' said Sally, 'only every one has to talk louder to Miss Winifred, and I suppose she wants some one to talk to her when the others are busy.'

'You would do very well for that job,' said Oxford; 'for a small cat I never heard such a rasping, powerful voice.'

'Yes, Miss Winifred always hears me,' said Sally.

'I have a very gentlemanly mew,' said Oxford; 'any one would know I had Furbush-Tailby blood just to hear my mew. But, to hear you and not see you, Sally, no one would suspect for a moment that you were a lady.'

'They'd know it if they saw me,' said Sally. 'Miss Harvey often says I am a perfect little lady.'

'I wonder if the loud speaker will be a man or a woman,' Oxford said.

Sally wondered, too, and whenever she was in the parlor and any one called, she listened to the voice of the caller with great interest.

One afternoon a gentleman called with a strong, loud voice. He called Miss Mann 'Cousin Winifred.' Sally was sure he was the loud speaker and that he had come to stay.

After some conversation that did not interest Sally, he fixed his eyes on her as she sat in the corner on her register and he said, 'You have a cat, I see.'

'She isn't exactly mine,' said Miss Winifred, 'but

she does me the honor to live in my house; she has a brother who lives here also, and there is another cat, Peter, who thinks he lives with us because he takes all his meals here and sleeps here on cold, stormy nights, but Oxford Gray, Junior, is certain he does not and drives him away.'

At last the conversation was becoming interesting. Sally wondered what the loud speaker would say. She had an idea by the way he had looked at herself that he did not realize the importance of cats.

'I went to call on two ladies the other day,' he said, 'who were longing to go back to the State of Washington where they used to live, but they said they could not go because the journey would be too much for their cat, who was old and settled in his ways.'

Sally wished she knew the ladies. They understood something of life and saw things in their right proportion.

'I suggested to them that they could give their cat away, or send him to the Animal Rescue League,' the loud speaker went on.

Sally became alarmed. If this were, indeed, the loud speaker, and he came here to live, what chance was there for Oxford and herself? Would he not make a clean sweep of all who wore fur coats? She was relieved to find by Miss Winifred's next question that he had a wife and several children. He surely could not be leaving them to come and live here just to talk to Miss Winifred. Presently he took his hat and went to the door, shaking hands with Miss Winifred, and saying it had been good to see her, and never giving one glance in Sally's direction.

'It was rude of him,' Sally said to herself, 'when I am a perfect lady. It never does any harm to be polite.'

A few days later, something that had a strange appearance was on the piano. Sally found it there one afternoon. It looked like a very small bureau with knobs in odd places, and two things that looked like clocks. Sally wondered what it could be. There was a small round table close by the piano, and on this was standing a long black thing, shaped something like a huge calla lily.

The next afternoon, when Sally was upstairs, she heard a concert going on in the parlor. There were several shrill voices and it sounded very much like the concerts Sally's cat friends sometimes gave. But these took place at night. Sally was of a curious nature, and she hurried down to see what was going on. To her surprise when she reached the parlor not a soul was to be seen except Miss Winifred. Sally had never heard her sing, and the sound seemed to be coming out of the black calla lily, for the piano was shut. Presently Miss Winifred touched one of the knobs and the music came to an end. Sally was more and more mystified. Then Miss Winifred touched a knob and Sally heard a man say, 'This is the friendly voice of Boston.' Sally agreed that Boston had a nice voice, but he was nowhere to be seen. She looked around the room, but could see no one. She went under the piano, thinking Boston might be there. Some one was giving a talk about grapefruit juice. Sally did not care about the talk, for she liked milk for her drink. Finally she got up on the table on which the big black calla lily stood and looked down into it.

The voice sounded so loud, Sally was frightened. She skipped down and ran out into the kitchen to tell Oxford about it.

'There's a man that's only got a voice and no body, and he lives in the black thing on the table, and his name is Boston,' she told him. 'And sometimes he sings.'

'That's the radio,' said Oxford. 'I heard Miss Harvey talking to Elvira about it. They have them in all the houses now. Even Peter knows about them.'

'You didn't know anything about it the other day,' Sally ventured.

'It is a long time since the other day,' said Oxford, 'and since then I have given my entire spare time to research. I have tried hard to learn all I could about the loud speakers and radios. Mr. Gardiner has one and I heard him talking to Miss Harvey. If one has masculine brains and sharp ears, there is no end to what one can learn. Sally, you are behind the times.'

CHAPTER XIII

SALLY BRACES UP

Now that Sally was used to the radio, she took a good deal of pleasure in it, in fact on very cold days she enjoyed it more than Miss Winifred did, for the parlor was a large room and the piano, where the radio stood, was between two long glass doors that let in a good deal of air through the cracks in winter weather. Sally, with her sharp ears, could hear every word the loud speaker said when she sat on her register in the opposite corner of the room. Sally knew that it was her own register, for there was another in the room. This one in the corner was often closed, so that Sally could lie there at her ease and feel just a pleasant warmth. Miss Winifred, who did not have a fur coat like Sally, had to walk up near the loud speaker and she was cold in

that corner even with a sweater on. Yes, there were many advantages in being a cat, Sally thought. It was fine to have perfect sight and not to have to wear eye-glasses and to be so small you could lie on a register, and hear every word the loud speaker said. But people had no choice; perhaps many of them like herself would prefer to be cats.

This New Year's Eve she was especially interested in the sermon Miss Winifred was hearing. It seemed made on purpose for cats, for it spoke of the grace and gayety of a young kitten chasing its tail. Sally pricked up her ears at this. She liked the minister, whoever he might be. He understood something about life. He went on to say how sympathy should be given to all young things. There was a part Sally did not quite understand, and then she was struck by these words: 'The beginning of the New Year is a good time to make resolutions, but every day is the beginning of a new year, we do not have to wait.' Sally was glad of this, for a year was so very long to a cat. However, as there was to be a year beginning, it seemed a good

time to make resolutions. She talked the matter over with Oxford afterward.

'One of your resolutions, I should say, ought to be to brace up,' said he.

'Yes,' said Sally meekly, 'that is one.'

'I should think,' he added, somewhat scornfully, 'that it was about time you caught a mouse.'

'Yes, that is another of my resolutions,' said she.

'I have a few in mind,' said Oxford. 'I mean to give Peter the biggest thrashing he has ever had.'

'And I surely will catch a mouse sometime, I promise you I will,' said Sally.

'I don't think it at all probable,' he said dryly. 'You'll have to learn to brace up first.'

It was springtime before the great event occurred. Every day in the new year Sally had remembered the words of the preacher. She said them over and over to herself every morning, 'Each day is the beginning of a new year,' and every morning she had said to herself, 'I will try to catch a mouse before the day is over.'

Sally thought there were other things in life that were as important as bracing up. Was not patience

equally commendable? And how about unselfishness? Would Oxford ever have the patience to sit for hours at a mouse-hole? Would he ever let her take a part of his food? But Oxford was a wonderful cat, a dream to look at compared with her, with his pink nose and his expansive white shirt-front. She had a tiger face and small white shirt-front, and even if patience and perseverance were rewarded at last and she caught her mouse, she could never be a mighty hunter. But he, with his rough ways, was never allowed in the parlor and she was. After all, life had its compensations.

All the same, Sally longed to catch a mouse.

The exciting event took place when Miss Winifred and Elvira had gone on their usual spring visit to New Hampshire. And it did not happen at all as Sally thought it would. It was early in the morning. Miss Harvey, Sally, and Oxford were alone in the house. Miss Harvey had made the kitchen fire, and put the tea-kettle on the stove. Oxford was just waking up and stretching himself. Sally, who was wide awake, saw a mouse glide past her on the freshly scrubbed kitchen floor. She darted forward

and seized the mouse. She had it firmly in her mouth. It was still alive, but she knew it could not escape. Oxford roused himself. Sally looked at him

with triumph in her eyes. 'See what I have caught. Didn't I tell you I would catch a mouse?' she seemed to say.

Oxford dashed forward angrily and knocked the mouse out of Sally's mouth. Sally had never been so angry in her life. Miss Harvey, hearing the commotion, turned just before Oxford had reached Sally. She saw what happened. The mouse was flying along the kitchen floor toward the outside door. Miss Harvey thought it most provoking of Oxford.

'Poor dear,' she said to Sally, 'it was your mouse.'

Sally was glad some one understood.

Miss Harvey opened the kitchen door that led into the passageway and then the outside door. Her sympathies were divided between Sally and the mouse. Poor tiny creature! It looked so frightened, and, after all, it probably enjoyed its life as much as Sally liked hers. But if that wretched Oxford got the mouse, Miss Harvey felt there was no justice to be looked for in this world. When she opened the door, she saw the mouse scurrying down the steps, and Sally and Oxford following after each other, tumbling down the steps in hot pursuit. It was as exciting as any race she had ever seen. Sally for once lost her temper as the mouse disappeared from view. She did not say all she thought. She said only a part of it, but Oxford was so astonished by what she did say that she seemed a different Sally in his eyes.

After she had spoken her vehement words, she returned to the house. Oxford felt taken down for the moment, but he soon rose to the occasion.

'It was a sort of an accident your catching that mouse,' he said. 'Anybody can catch a mouse if it goes just where they are.'

Sally was already beginning to cool down.

'Not everybody,' she said. 'Miss Harvey has told me more than once that she never caught a mouse in her life.'

CHAPTER XIV

SALLY AND SPOT

'The Conants have got a dog,' Sally said to Oxford one day. 'Isn't that awful?'

'Are you sure they've got one?'

'Yes, I heard Miss Harvey say so, and I've seen him.'

'You've seen him?'

'Yes, he was skipping about in our clothes-yard this morning. Miss Harvey wouldn't let me out. She said it was too dangerous. I was afraid you'd meet him.'

'What does he look like?'

'Miss Harvey told Elvira he was a wire-haired terrier. He's white with a black spot. He's not so terribly big, but it seems he hates cats and loves to chase them. Miss Harvey thinks he would kill us if he got the chance.'

'I'm quite sure he wouldn't kill me,' said Oxford.

'I don't suppose he would, but he might kill me.'

'Not if I am around, Sally. You had better never go out without me.'

Oxford and Sally were sitting in the kitchen windows as they were talking, and they could look across at the windows in the Conant house. Suddenly Sally gave a hiss.

'What is the matter?' asked Elvira.

'He's there; it's himself,' said Sally, but Elvira could not understand.

Oxford understood, and he looked across at the Conant house. There, in one of the windows, was the monster who would like to kill cats.

He was not so terrible to look at. The cats gazed at him fascinated. He looked back at them with a fixed gaze.

Elvira heard some more hisses and going to the window she saw Spot.

'Bless your hearts, he can't get you,' said Elvira. 'There are two sets of window-panes between you and Spot.'

It gave a new thrill to life having Spot living next

door, but it was most inconvenient, for Oxford and Sally were always kept in when Spot was taking his exercise.

'He doesn't seem to realize this place is ours,' said Oxford. 'He walks into this clothes-yard, just as bold as if it belonged to him.'

'But there is no fence between the two places,' said Sally. 'We go into Mrs. Conant's garden whenever we like.'

'We are old settlers,' said Oxford. 'We have a right to go where we please, but I call it bold for an impudent young puppy to come over into our yard. Before we know it, he will be in the Wild Wood.'

He had an endless fascination for them, however. They liked to watch him starting out at an early hour in the morning for an airing with Mrs. Conant's husband. They trembled and felt safer when he went back to the house and the door closed.

Elvira would say, 'I think it is safe for Oxford and Sally to go out now. It will be some time before Spot goes out again.'

They never felt much security when they were out, for at any moment the door of the Conant

house might open and the monster might come out.

'Anyway, he can't climb trees,' said Oxford, 'and there are a lot of them about.'

As the days passed and nothing happened, they grew less and less afraid of their enemy and more and more confident, and there was always the excitement of sitting at the kitchen windows and looking across at Spot as he sat at his window. Sometimes they saw Mrs. Conant pass the window with Spot frisking along by her side. She would wave her hand as she passed. It was the season of the year when her pretty pink dress seemed to Sally more suitable to the weather than her own coat of fur.

Sally felt sure that some day there would be a meeting between herself and Spot. She did not know why she felt so sure of this. When she spoke of her fears to Oxford, he said: 'How silly you are, Sally. All you have to do is to stay close by me, and I will defend you with my good right paw.'

'I am sure you would,' said Sally, 'but some-

times you go off on journeys. I can't stay shut up in the house all day when you go on a journey.'

'Of course, I can't give up all my pleasure trips to stay at home and protect you. The only safe thing is never to go out unless you see that impudent scoundrel's face in the window. When he's in, he can't be out.'

'But he might suddenly be let out,' said Sally.

And this was exactly what did happen one bright day in early June when Oxford was away for a day or two.

Sally saw Spot in the window and she mewed to be let out. She mewed and mewed until even Miss Winifred heard. The others were at the top of the house. They could hear her, but it was a long way to come down just for Sally.

'Poor pussy,' said Miss Winifred, as she opened the kitchen door. 'What do you want?'

Sally mewed again in her strong voice and went to the outside door.

'Do you want to go out?' said Miss Winifred, as she opened the screen door.

Sally made it evident that she did. She ran down

the steps to the clothes-yard. It was good to get out into the bright sunshine, and she ran down toward the street. Suddenly she heard an awful bark and looking up she saw that the monster was almost upon her. Trembling all over, Sally fairly flew over the ground and scampered up the nearest tree. There she sat looking down on Spot. He was standing still at the foot of the tree looking up at her. Some time passed, and finally Sally gathered courage to ask,

'How long are you going to stay there?'

'Until you come down,' said Spot.

'I mean to stay here a long time,' said Sally. 'Days, perhaps. It is very comfortable in this tree.'

'Is it? It doesn't look so.'

Time passed. It seemed hours to Sally. The round sun was getting low in the heavens, and still that awful dog stood there at the foot of the tree. Sally did not dare to come down.

'I've often seen you in the window,' said Sally pleasantly. 'I should think you would want to go back to that nice window; it seems a little cold here.'

'I've often noticed you at your window,' said Spot. 'I was thinking it was about time for you to go home.'

'I mean to stay out all night,' said Sally. 'I never was out all night. My friends give fine concerts then. There is to be a moon to-night.'

Time passed, and Sally was growing hungry and tired. Would no one come for her? Miss Harvey and Elvira would not know she had been let out, and she had heard them say that Miss Winifred was going off for the night. Poor Sally was getting more and more miserable.

'Don't you think Mrs. Conant will worry if you stay out so long?' she asked.

'She never worries. She lets me lead a free life. How about Elvira and Miss Harvey? What will they think if you don't come in?'

'They don't know I'm out.'

The sky was clouding over and the bright sun was going to set long before its time in a bank of gray.

'It is going to rain,' said Sally. 'I don't mind the rain at all because of my warm fur coat.' All the same, she didn't like to get wet. 'Do you mind the rain, Spot?'

'No, but it isn't going to rain,' he said.

Sally was now longing to get into the house. She gave another of her piercing mews which she had been giving at intervals, but she was some distance

from the house and Elvira did not know that she was out.

'Some cat is in trouble. It sounds a little like

Sally's mew,' Elvira said to Miss Harvey. 'Did you let her out?'

'No, I am sure she is somewhere around the house.'

Presently, to Sally's joy, she saw Mrs. Conant coming along the avenue.

'Why, Spotty, what are you doing here?' she asked.

She looked up to see what the dog was watching, and she saw poor Sally in the tree.

'Come, Spotty, come home at once and let that poor cat alone,' she said.

As she passed the kitchen window she said: 'One of your cats has been treed by Spotty. I am very sorry. He ought to have better manners.'

'She is the nicest person,' Sally said to herself as she scrambled down the tree after she heard the front door close on Mrs. Conant and her dog. 'She understands the feelings of a cat, but it is strange she could not tell the difference between Oxford and me. Perhaps I'm growing better-looking now I am fatter.'

CHAPTER XV

THE FAMILY TREE

It seemed strange to Sally that as nice a person as Mrs. Conant should care as much as she did for a creature like Spot. It was all she could do to listen in silence to a conversation that she had with Miss Winifred one afternoon in the parlor. The two were sitting on the sofa while Sally was looking out of the window.

She was watching some birds that were taking a bath in the bird bath. First a blue jay went in and splashed about, and after he came out, a robin fluttered down from his perch in a tree.

'Spot has a good pedigree,' said Mrs. Conant. 'His Family Tree is quite as good in its way as Mr. Conant's.'

Sally listened while the two ladies talked of these matters, and she thought of her glorious ancestors. She wished she had a Family Tree herself, but later, when she talked the matter over with Oxford, he said it was nonsense.

'Let us play with our catnip mice,' he said.

As usual they had a fine time and Sally was so stimulated that she felt like talking in verse.

I long to have a family tree
  And show to all my true descent,
But Oxford says a family tree
  Is not a tree for kittens meant.
To know his father is enough,
  For he was made of valiant stuff.

But I would like to trace them all,
  Back to proud William of great fame,
Who lived, they say, in princely hall,
  And bore almost a royal name,
Down to myself, then, all would say,
  'She's royal, though she's small and gray.'

There were great singers in my race,
  Who sat upon the garden wall,
Tenors, sopranos, and a bass,
  Who nightly concerts gave to all,

And mighty hunters were the rule
But Oxford thinks me such a fool.

He says his mind he will not vex
About such matters, that it's base,
But I am of the other sex
And I delight in pride of race,
But Oxford only says, says he,
Strong paws are more than ancestry.

To catch a mouse is better far
Than grandfathers of high degree,
He loved his friendly grandmamma,
And nothing but a waif was she.
The day is bright, some tree we'll climb,
To stay indoors would be a crime.

I know if I have children fair,
Some little kittens good to see,
Furry and bright, a lusty pair,
I'd like to have a family tree.
But Oxford said, 'Let's have some fun,
The door is open, let us run.'

So to the woods we gayly went
And there we had a lively race,
And such a joyous hour we spent
Chasing each other round the place.
'If you must have a family tree,
I'll find one in the woods,' said he.

Sally was sent up a tree by Spot more than once, and even Oxford had to fly from him several times, for to stay indoors in the lovely summer weather was altogether impossible. There came to be a certain excitement in escaping from their enemy which gave a dash of spice to their life. And there was one day they would never forget when Spot met the two of them in the Wild Wood. Oxford had promised to defend Sally, but all the same, she thought it wiser to scamper up the nearest tree, for it might happen that her brave brother would get the worst of the fight. Oxford looked about him to see where Sally was and, finding she was safe, he thought it better to join her and not to fight Spot, for Sally would be happier if he were in the tree, too. So the pair sat there looking down with scorn on their enemy.

'Who are you, anyway?' Oxford asked. 'You low creature not able to climb like us!'

'I come of a very fine stock. My mistress looked up my pedigree before she bought me. It is written on paper.'

'I thought you seemed like a thing that had been

bought with money,' said Oxford. 'My sister and I are free, not slaves. No money could buy us. We could leave our home to-morrow if we liked.'

'Perhaps you could to-morrow,' Spot called back. 'But you don't seem to be able to leave now. Not while I am at the foot of this tree.'

Now, only a few days before, Oxford had been scorning musty records, but to Sally's surprise he said: 'If my sister and I chose to take the trouble, we could have a family tree with an ancestry that would absolutely astonish you, Spot. We go back to a cat who was named William the Conqueror, because he always knocked his enemy flat. He was the first Furbush — I mean we can trace back no farther; of course, there were others back of him.'

'Well,' said Spot, 'I am sure my ancestors were all so great that every one was a conqueror, and as for my master, he was one of the first settlers — his ancestors were, I mean.'

'That is nothing,' said Oxford. 'Miss Winifred is descended from one of the kings of France.'

'Indeed!' said Spot. 'One wouldn't think it to look at her.'

'Not that I care a great deal about such things myself,' said Oxford.

'I shouldn't suppose you would,' said Spot, 'for I have heard that your mother's mother was just a little waif without home or family.'

This was too much for Oxford. He started to scramble down the tree, and Sally was afraid that Spot would fly at him and perhaps kill him.

'Oxford,' she said, 'is that a bird's nest on that upper bough?'

Oxford paused in his descent to look up.

'I don't see anything. Where is it?'

'I saw something very like a bird's nest,' she said.

Oxford forgot all about his grandmother in his interest in the nest, which might be full of young birds.

'Dogs are very superior to cats,' Spot was saying. 'Every one says so. It is a well-known fact.'

'Who says so?' Oxford asked.

'My master and my mistress, and all the dogs I know.'

'The people who make their home with us greatly

prefer cats, and every cat I have ever met says cats are much brighter than dogs,' said Oxford.

'Prove it,' Spot said with a loud bark.

'Can you climb a tree?' Sally asked.

'I am so superior that I do not have to climb trees,' said Spot.

'Can you catch a mouse?' Oxford inquired.

'I don't care about mice. I can be a true companion for man. Men don't climb trees, at least not as a rule, and they can't catch mice. And dogs are unselfish. I have heard of many a dog losing his life to save his master, or dying of grief because his master has died.'

Oxford and Sally were considerably impressed. For once Oxford was at a loss as to what to reply, but Sally was thinking things out.

'I would do a great deal for Miss Harvey,' she said. 'Maybe some day I'll have a chance to save her life, but what good does it ever do to die of grief if one loses a friend? It seems to me wiser just to be a good friend to all the friends one has left than to die of grief.'

Sally was astonished at her own words, but she

had learned this from Oxford. And just then who should come along the avenue that led to the two houses but Mrs. Conant with her husband in their automobile.

'Spotty, what are you doing here? I didn't mean you to get out until we came back,' said Mrs. Conant. 'John, you had better get out and take Spot back with you, and I'll go on to the house. Spot has treed two cats.'

As Spot walked off unwillingly with his master, he flung back these words, 'I'll ask Mrs. Conant my exact pedigree and I'll tell it to you the next time we meet.'

'We don't have to take that trouble,' Oxford retorted; 'our family tree is complete in our heads, beginning with William the Conqueror and coming down to Martha Furbush-Tailby, our great-great-grandmother, and then to William Furbush-Tailby, the poet, and then to his daughter, who married our grandfather Oxford Forepaw Gray; his son was my father, Oxford Gray, and I am Oxford Gray, Junior.'

'I know who you are, you are a no-account bragging cat,' said Spot, as he vanished into the house.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TRAVELING CAT

One day Sally looked out of the screen door and she saw a new cat looking in at the window. He had a glossy coat of long black fur, and a white shirt-front and four white paws. At least they once had been white, but they were dirt-color from much traveling. Sally looked at the cat and the cat looked at Sally.

He asked Sally if he could get a meal at the house. Sally was about to say she would speak to Elvira, for she could always attract her attention by mewing or clawing her gown, when Oxford came to the screen door.

'You can't. This is my house. Clear out, and don't show your black coat around here again!'

The black cat was very much offended. 'I am an important person,' he hissed back. 'I'm a great traveler. I've come all the way from Malden, and

I've been at the wharves in Boston and taken one or two sea voyages.'

'You'd better take a few more,' said Oxford. 'You are not wanted here.'

And yet he was considerably impressed. Sally liked the appearance of the stranger, and yet she was a little afraid of him.

'My name is Captain Ebony Black,' said the traveling cat. 'I'm called Eben by my friends. I'd like to fight you some day when we meet out-of-doors,' he added as he looked at Oxford.

'Just what I should like,' said Oxford. 'I always fight all the cats who come into my grounds.'

'Do you own the whole place?' the traveling cat asked. 'I thought this was where Peter lived.'

'He thinks he lives here,' Oxford snarled, 'but the place belongs to me.'

'And to me, too,' put in Sally.

'I let her live here,' Oxford said, 'because she is my sister.'

Elvira, who was washing dishes, turned to see what was happening, for although she could not understand their language, she could tell that some

sort of a row was going on. The cats were looking at each other fiercely, one on one side of the screen and one on the other.

'Come, Oxford, be a good cat,' she said; 'here is some supper for you.'

Supper, indeed! When one was longing to fight an enemy! He made a few more angry remarks to the visitor, and ended by calling him 'Blackie,' which was hard for Captain Ebony Black to bear, for he came of an old family.

'Who are you, anyway?' he growled.

'My great-grandfather was a Furbush,' said Oxford, 'and he was descended from a Furbush, who was called "William the Conqueror."'

'I am descended from the first Ebony Black who came to this country. There's been an Ebony Black in each generation.'

Sally was greatly impressed, for ancestors meant so much to her.

'Come and eat your supper like a good cat,' said Elvira, and then, thinking that the stranger might be hungry, she took a plate of canned salmon and bread out to the back porch.

'Elvira is feeding our enemy,' said Oxford.

He seemed a fine-looking pussy to Sally, but she said nothing.

'The way in which all the cats in the neighborhood come into my place is outrageous!' said Oxford, as he began to eat his fish.

'After all,' Sally reminded him, 'the place is Miss Winifred's and Elvira's, and if they don't mind ——'

'I've explained to you a great many times, Sally, that the true owner of a place is the one who uses it the most, and so I say the back yard and the Wild Wood are mine.'

'Then the parlor is certainly mine,' said Sally, 'for I am there much more than Miss Winifred.'

'You can call the parlor yours, or can own the house if you like, but the land is mine.'

The traveling cat thoroughly enjoyed his meal. He was shy with strangers and had no idea of coming into the house, but he had taken a liking to Sally's modest appearance. She looked as if she might be an old-fashioned cat, with whom one could have a pleasant talk if Oxford was not

around. So he hung about the place, occasionally coming for a meal on the back porch. And one day he met Sally in the Wild Wood and they had a friendly chat, for Oxford was not there.

'I don't mean any harm,' said the traveling cat, 'and I don't think your brother need be so rude.'

'He's the kindest brother,' Sally said, 'but he had such a hard time winning his way in the world when he was young that, when he did at last find a home for himself and me, he wants to hold on to it.'

'I don't care about a home for long at a time,' said the traveling cat. 'I like to take a voyage every now and then in a ship. It doesn't cost anything, for I just walk on board, and I don't have to bother about a passport, and I can always make myself useful by hunting rats and mice.'

'It must be exciting to travel,' Sally said. 'But I am so home-loving I like to stay just where I've lived for so long.'

She told Oxford some of the tales of his travels that Ebony Black had told her. Oxford said the fellow was too fond of bragging, but the dazzling visions of distant spots began to have their effect.

'Why don't you drive him off the place, Sally?' he asked. 'I will if I ever find him here.'

'I suppose he has as much a right to be here as Peter,' said Sally. 'There's room for everybody, Elvira said so.'

'Oh, Elvira! She would have all the stray cats and dogs in town here if she had her way. That fellow thinks Ebony Black is a name to be proud of,' Oxford went on. 'I never heard of the family in my life.'

Sally was sorry she had spoken of Ebony Black, but she had been so impressed by his tales that she wanted to share them with Oxford.

'The way Elvira treats that fellow to canned salmon is too much!' said Oxford.

'But she isn't taking anything from us, for we don't like canned salmon,' said Sally.

'She'll spend all her money if she doesn't look out,' said Oxford, 'and then she can't get haddock for us.'

'I am sure Elvira has lots of money,' said Sally.

'Well, anyway, I don't propose to have her feeding every cat in town,' said Oxford.

'Captain Ebony Black belongs in Malden,' said Sally. 'That is, when he isn't traveling. He'll be leaving soon.'

'He'll be leaving this very day if I run across him,' said Oxford.

CHAPTER XVII

OXFORD GOES ON A JOURNEY

Now that the autumn had come, Oxford was seized with a desire to travel. He had been considerably impressed by the tales the traveling cat had told Sally, although he had not let her see this. And then there was Peter. He was but a poor creature, to be sure, but the tales he told of the free life in the open appealed to Oxford.

'I am going on a journey,' he said to Sally one morning.

'Oh, Oxford, aren't you happy here with me? What more do you want?'

'I am tired of this back yard and of the Wild Wood. It all seems too cramped to me. I want

some good hunting, such as that tiresome, no-account Peter has had.'

'What could be better than the hunting is here?'

Sally asked. 'Haven't you caught your ninth mouse this season? And you got a robin the other day.'

'Yes, and there was an awful row about it. I never saw Elvira in such a state.'

'I don't quite see why,' said Sally. 'Elvira eats turkeys and chickens. Why can't we eat robins?'

'That is a different matter. They have their own laws.'

'Do explain it to me,' said Sally.

'You could never understand it,' said her brother.

Sally suspected that he could not understand it either, but being wise beyond her years, for it was years now, she did not say so.

Sally did not ask Oxford to take her with him. She liked home life best, and she was beginning to have a few friends. It was pleasant to be a favorite in a modest way, if not a belle, and she liked the serenades they gave her on moonlight nights. And above all, she loved Miss Harvey, and she knew Miss Harvey would not care to take a journey with Oxford and herself.

So Sally bade Oxford good-bye, and said she hoped he would have a pleasant journey and come back the next day.

'I may be gone two nights,' he said. 'Don't worry unless I am gone three.'

'I am sorry to have you go,' said Sally.

'I am sorry to leave you, Sally, but it is too much to be tied to a woman's apron string, and

there are three of them in this house, all wearing aprons.'

'I suppose you know best,' said Sally, 'but when I think of our early days and of how we had to scratch around for food and a place to sleep in, I am contented with my lot.'

'I am glad you are, Sally, but I want to visit foreign parts. Perhaps I can get as far as Malden.'

'Oh, do be careful! Don't get on a boat, whatever you do!'

Oxford promised to be cautious, for in the main he was a home-loving cat. He merely wanted to see the world in a quiet and safe way without running any great risks.

'Remember there is fine hunting here,' Sally said again.

'Yes, but, as I said before, these women make such a fuss. They force a fellow into going into the big world for hunting. You'd think, after catching nine mice, no one would grudge me a robin or two and she with her chicken dinners!'

Sally looked very down-hearted when the actual parting came.

'You must buck up, Sally,' he said, for he had learned this phrase from the traveling cat. It seemed to mean more than 'brace up.' Sally was a grown cat now, and a grown cat certainly ought to buck up.

Sally missed Oxford, but there was a certain peace about the place. She could eat the whole of her dinner without his taking part of it, and she could see her friends freely without having them driven off the place by Oxford. She missed him, of course; still, there was a certain peace.

No one discovered his absence until bedtime, for he had often been late before.

'Where is Oxford?' Miss Harvey asked Elvira.

'Oxford! I don't know,' said Elvira, as she took off her hat and coat. 'Why should I know where Oxford is? I didn't take him to Boston with me.'

'I thought you might have some idea where he was,' said Miss Harvey. 'He never comes in for me.'

They went through the garden and the Wild Wood calling, 'Oxford, Oxford, Oxford Gray, Junior.'

'Sometimes he'll come in for the Junior,' said Elvira, but there was no scampering of small feet and no furry face to be seen.

'Cats certainly are the limit,' said Elvira. 'You get fond of one, and the first thing you know he's off like a shot.'

'Sally looks very wise,' said Miss Harvey, as they went back into the house. 'I dare say she knows just where Oxford is.'

'I wish I did,' Sally said, but no one heard her. 'I fear he is in some miserable place, and hungry and cold.' For it had begun to rain. Sally could hear the raindrops pattering down the window-pane.

'This is a good little cat,' and Elvira stroked Sally. 'She never gives us any trouble.'

'She is a perfect lady, the sweetest little thing,' said Miss Harvey, as Sally climbed into her lap.

Sally put her two paws around Miss Harvey's neck.

It was not until after the third night that Sally began to worry, for Oxford had told her not to worry until after that. After the third night, she began to miss him very much, indeed. There had

been a certain peace in his absence at first, but it seemed too peaceful now. Moreover, she had had much pleasant conversation with Captain Ebony Black, who had seen the world. He was a good-looking cat with his long-haired, glossy, black coat and white shirt-front. A black cat was an interesting variety in her life, and, although she knew that the tigers were of a nobler race, it made a pleasant change to see some one so different. Moreover, the black cat had said kind things to Sally, as kind things as Miss Harvey had said. But he had gone now, and so she had more time to worry about her brother.

'I do hope he will realize there is no place like home before it is too late and something awful happens to him,' said Sally, and she softly repeated the familiar words to herself: '"Mid pleasures and palaces, though I may roam; be it ever so humble, there's no place like Home."'

She hoped he would think of his basket and his little sister, and of kind Elvira who always warmed his milk, and of the haddock that she served for him. Nothing seemed the same without Oxford.

When five days had gone by and still he did not come, gloom descended upon the household.

'I knew something would happen to him,' said Miss Winifred. 'That is why I did not want another cat. Something always happens once I get attached to one.'

'He may turn up yet,' said Miss Harvey.

'He may turn up yet' — that sounded very hopeless. Had it come to that?

'I wish I'd never let him go on the journey,' said Sally, 'and yet how could I have helped it? His mind was made up. I know he won't come back. He told me not to worry until after three days, and that meant that, if he did not come back then, something would have happened.'

The three women to whose apron strings Oxford had been tied, had been around to the neighbors asking if any one had seen a tiger cat with white paws and a white breast. As there were several cats of this sort in the neighborhood, many people thought they had seen him, but the cat never proved to be Oxford himself.

'Black Sam, Sam Furbush-Tailby, I mean, was

once gone ten days,' said Elvira. 'Oxford will probably come back.'

'Several of your pets have never come back,' said Miss Winifred.

'I am going over to Handerson Court,' said Elvira. 'Maybe some one there will have seen him.'

As Elvira went along the strip of land that led to Handerson Court, she heard a faint mew. It seemed a cry of distress, and it sounded to her like Oxford's voice. She hurried over the grass and went through the gap in the fence. Presently she saw a thin tiger cat coming toward her with his head firmly encased in a fish can that some one must have carelessly thrown away without flattening it.

'Oh, poor pussy, whoever you are, you are in an awful fix,' said Elvira.

As the cat came nearer, she could hardly believe it was Oxford, he looked so thin, but she thought she recognized the markings on his tail. Another minute and there was no doubt at all, for he began to mew piteously again, and it was Oxford's voice.

The proud Oxford, who felt affection, but seldom showed it, was delighted to recognize the voice of a friend.

Elvira picked him up and carried the frightened, struggling cat to the house.

'Poor dear, where have you been?' she asked him. 'You must have been shut in somewhere, and when they found you and let you out, you must have been so hungry that you smelled the fish and thought you could get some of it.'

She put Oxford down in the kitchen. Sally was frightened at first at the sight of the can with no head to be seen, but when she found it was really Oxford, she ran up to him. Poor Oxford! Suppose they could not get his head out of the can. But Elvira and Miss Harvey worked away at him, and presently Oxford's head emerged, but his beautiful fur was all over rust. Elvira stamped on the can to flatten it out.

'No cat will ever be caught in that can again,' she said.

Sally flew to wash Oxford, and Miss Harvey and Elvira began to scrub him, while Miss Winifred

stood in the doorway and said, 'Poor cat, do you suppose he will ever get over it?'

'I'm all right,' Oxford said, but only Sally understood.

'Where were you?' Sally asked. 'Why didn't you come home before? Did you have good hunting?'

'I have been in prison, Sally,' said Oxford. 'I was accidentally shut up in a building without food, so when I came out, I was very hungry.'

'Did you think of home and your sister?' Sally ventured to ask.

'Yes, Sally.' Oxford was never one to show much affection. 'Yes,' he said, 'I thought of home, and of the hunting in the Wild Wood. I thought, too, of Blackie; I am glad to see he is not about.'

'Captain Ebony Black has had to go on another journey,' said Sally.

'I am glad of that; and Peter, where is he?'

'Peter was around last night, I think. It is getting cold. I think he slept in the cellar last night.'

Oxford was hungrily eating some haddock at the time. How good it tasted!

'When I have got back to my full weight,' said he, 'I hope to show Peter once for all that this is not his home.'

'I am glad it is your home, Oxford,' said Sally. 'Aren't you glad to get back?'

Oxford was in truth very glad, indeed, but he did not like to show his feelings.

'A fellow might do worse,' he said.

CHAPTER XVIII

SALLY HAS HER WISH

One morning some weeks later, Elvira had the surprise of her life. She came down into the kitchen and looked around for the two cats. Oxford was stretched out on his woolen blanket under the table, but Sally was nowhere to be seen. Elvira remembered that she had left the lower drawer of the kitchen dresser open thinking that Sally might like to sleep there for a change, so she went over and looked in. For a moment she was startled and thought she must have seen wrong and that Sally had caught two mice. But although the furry objects were the smallest kittens she had ever seen and hardly larger than mice, there was no mistaking their fur coats. One was black with four very

tiny white paws and a white breast, and the other was white with a tiger tail and a tiger blanket on its back.

'Miss Harvey,' Elvira called, 'did you ever see anything so sweet?'

Sally's whole expression had changed. Instead of having a sad little face, she looked proud and happy. It seemed as if she were saying: 'See what I have got for wishing for it? I have had to wish for a very long time, but at last I have got just what I wanted, twins, a brother and a sister, just like Oxford and myself, and the darlings shall have a happier kittenhood than we had. And she said to herself,

> If I cannot have a mother, a mother I will be
> With some darling, furry children of my own,
> The furriest, purriest kittens, the most harum-scarum kittens,
> The liveliest, gayest kittens ever known.

It seemed this time as if Miss Harvey understood everything she said, for she remarked, 'Dear Sally has got her wish at last; see how blissfully happy she looks, Elvira!'

They decided it would be wiser not to mention the kittens to Miss Winifred for a few days, as she had a friend staying with her who was taking all of her thoughts at present. So the kittens were almost a week old before Miss Winifred knew about them.

One morning Elvira said, 'Sally has two little kittens.'

'Kittens!' Miss Winifred said in astonishment. 'I am very sorry to hear it.'

'Sorry to hear it,' said Elvira, 'and you think you are fond of cats.'

'Four seem too many to have in one house, and they will grow into cats, but we can keep them for a time and then send them to the Ellen Gifford Home, or else find good homes for them.'

'Would you like to see them?' Elvira asked.

Miss Winifred went into the kitchen, and Elvira put one of the tiny creatures into her hand and then the other. No one with a heart for kittens could help being touched by the sight of these furry creatures and the anxious expression of their mother's face as she watched Miss Winifred, for she was not sure of her.

'Please don't drop them,' she pleaded in her own language. 'Please don't even think about homes for them later on. This is a good home, and I will be a good mother. I do so want their kittenhood to be happy and not sad like mine.'

Miss Winifred put the kittens down very gently.

'At any rate, they can't leave their mother for some weeks,' she said.

It was not long before these tiny objects were scampering about the kitchen floor, getting in front

of Elvira's feet just as their mother and their uncle had done, for they found a way of getting out of the drawer of the dresser. They made a stepladder of their mother, and, climbing on her back, gave a flying leap to the floor and then chased each other about. Patty, the little tiger kitten, was more lively than her brother Eben, and she would turn a somersault as she reached him and then they would skip about in high glee, and wrestle together. There had never been such gay kittens in Miss Winifred's house.

'It is as good as a tonic having them around,' said Miss Winifred, one morning as she visited the kitchen.

'Certainly they are like a tonic to their mother,' said Miss Harvey. 'I never saw any one more changed.'

Oxford was not at all interested in his niece and nephew, so he spent more of his time than usual away from home. It was the gentle Peter who was all ready to be friendly, and when the two kittens went dancing up to him, he was pleased. But Sally, who feared he would do them harm, raised her

powerful voice to call them to her, and then gave Peter the thrashing that Oxford had meant to give him. She seemed possessed by fury as she flew at him and put her claws in his fur.

'Look at your perfect lady now,' said Elvira to Miss Harvey.

'She is a good mother. She is only afraid he will hurt her children,' said Miss Harvey.

Sometimes in the days that followed, Sally wished that her desires had not been granted so completely. She loved having her kittens and she was glad they were having a happier kittenhood than her own, that was so sombre and sad. But why had she ever asked for 'harum-scarum' kittens, or the 'liveliest, gayest kittens ever known'? Surely it would have been enough to wish for 'Kittens'! Sally was not sure that it was ever wise to wish too hard for anything, and yet she liked to watch her children playing so fearlessly, for kind Elvira and dear Miss Harvey let them frisk about the kitchen as they pleased. One day Eben got into one of Elvira's rubbers that were in the entry. He peered out from this pleasant spot as

if to say, 'See the nice little house I have found, it just fits me.' Baskets and boxes they appropriated for their own, and on cold nights, after the kitchen fire was out, Sally joined them and they slept warm and comfortable in a pasteboard box just the right size for three.

When they ran up Elvira's back and pulled out her hairpins, or landed on the clock shelf in the

kitchen in search of their catnip mice and knocked down a few trifles, Sally said, 'Children, children, why can't you be quiet and well-behaved, as your uncle and I were!'

'But, mother, you once told us you knocked a candlestick off the study mantelpiece,' Patty reminded her.

'That is true,' said their mother, who was a very fair cat.

'You said you climbed up Elvira,' said Eben; 'that is what put the idea into our heads.'

'I never did it but once or twice, not every day. I was a much quieter kitten.'

'Because you were half-starved,' said Patty. 'Mother, just be a kitten with us. Be young with your children.'

CHAPTER XIX

SALLY IS YOUNG WITH HER CHILDREN

Before Sally had any kittens she used to wonder at the shiftless way in which the wild tortoise-shell cat who sometimes came about the place dealt with her kittens. Sally knew she would not have the slightest trouble in making her children mind, if she were so fortunate as to have any. But it is one thing to make imaginary children mind and quite another to deal with real ones.

She would say in her powerful voice, 'Come, Patty, come, Eben, be quiet. Come to me. Let Elvira's sweater alone,' and the pair would gayly prance about the room with the sweater between them, Eben firmly grasping a sleeve, and Patty the hem.

'Children, did you hear what I said?' she would add.

'Yes, mother,' said the gay pair, and they went on dancing about the room. Then Sally would raise her voice again, and finally Elvira would stamp her foot and say, 'Sally, be quiet!' which was very unfair of Elvira, Sally thought, when she was doing her best to make the kittens mind.

'I can't understand why you are not better behaved,' she said to them.

'Mother, dear, didn't you want us to have a lively, happy kittenhood, different from yours?' Patty asked, as she dropped the sweater and put a paw around her mother's neck.

Then Patty leaped upon the table and gave a flying jump into the sink, where Elvira had put some water in a pan. Eben quickly followed her.

'We are waiting for Miss Winifred to come out,' said Patty. 'We like her lap for naps, it is so woolly and she's so kind.'

'Kind!' said Sally. 'She thought of sending you to the Ellen Gifford Home. Perhaps she will yet.'

'I am sure she hasn't any idea of it, mother,' said Patty. 'Once Miss Winifred gets fond of you, she's all right. She's a dear. Her lap is a lot woollier than Elvira's.'

Presently Miss Winifred came into the kitchen, moving slowly in her near-sighted way, so as not to step on a kitten. Patty darted past her as if to dare her to step on her tail. Miss Winifred seated herself in the big rocking-chair, ready to discuss the meals. Presently Patty ran up her skirt and settled down in her lap. Eben then appeared, getting up very slowly with more than one fall, but arriving at last. He always liked everything Patty had, so he moved her to the other side of Miss Winifred's lap and slipped into her place.

Sally came over and sat on the arm of Miss Winifred's chair, for she still felt a little uneasy about the Ellen Gifford Home.

'These kittens are perfectly fascinating,' said Miss Winifred.

'Did you hear that, mother?' said Eben.

'She knows how to make pretty speeches,' said Sally.

'I like pretty speeches,' said Eben. 'I wish you'd make a few, mother.'

'If you'll come into the basket to take your nap, I'll sing the song that your great-great-grandmother composed. The Martha Furbush for whom you are named, Patty.'

Out of curiosity to hear the song, the kittens scrambled down from Miss Winifred's lap and joined their mother in the basket. She gently purred:

Purr, darlings, purr,
While mother is washing your fur.
In all the great nation
There's no occupation
That's half so sweet to her.
Purr, darlings, purr.

Patty grew restless while the song was going on, and she skipped out of the clothes-basket.

'My darling, don't you think it a sweet song?'

'I think it is a lot more interesting hearing Elvira reading the paper aloud to Miss Winifred, than to listen to you singing,' said Patty.

'When you have children of your own, Patty, you will appreciate how every mother feels.'

'I just love to hear about the cat that came all forlorn and full of burrs to the lady who took him in and made a home for him,' Patty went on. 'I'd love to get out and be stuck full of burrs, mother.'

'There was a verse in the Cradle Song about hissing,' Sally said.

'Oh, try to remember it, mother,' they begged.

'I'm sorry, but I've forgotten it.'

As the kittens grew older, Sally found it harder and harder to make them mind. One day she found her dear little Patty in a drawer in the kitchen, one that she had never got into before. Sally was terribly worried for fear some thoughtless person would shut the drawer with her child in it. She called and called to Patty to come out. She called until Elvira stamped her foot and said, 'Be quiet, Sally.'

Then Sally stopped to think things out.

'I see that the door into the passageway is open, Patty,' she said. 'Wouldn't you like to come with me into the other part of the house?'

It had worked. Patty sprang out of the drawer and gayly followed her mother, for she had longed

to go into the parlor again ever since the day that she and Eben had been taken there to show to some admiring ladies who were having afternoon tea with Miss Winifred.

Patty and her mother went up a flight of stairs to the sewing-room door, which was open. There was no door open into the other part of the house.

'Oh, is that all you've got to show me! I've seen this old room before,' said Patty.

'You've seen it before? When?'

'Uncle Peter showed it to us one day when you were in the parlor with Miss Harvey.'

'Uncle Peter! That tramp cat is no relation of yours. It is Oxford who is your uncle.'

'Uncle Peter said he wasn't any relation,' said Patty, 'but we asked if we might call him that, for we like him a lot better. Uncle Oxford tries to make us mind, and it isn't his business. He isn't our mother.'

'I don't want you playing around with Peter.'

'But, mother, he tells us such lots of exciting stories. He's going to take Eben hunting as soon as we are big enough to be let out.'

Patty was halfway down the stairs as she spoke. Her mother followed her anxiously. What should she do to keep her child out of that drawer. To her intense relief, she saw that Elvira had closed it.

It was a very cold day, and Eben was standing absorbed in the passageway to the outside door, watching Peter, who was fighting another cat.

'Eben,' she called in her shrill voice, 'come in at once, you will take cold.'

'For pity sake, keep quiet, Sally,' said Elvira, stamping her foot. Eben did not move.

Then Patty went and touched her brother with her paw and tried to get him in out of the cold. Cat fights had no interest for her. He shook her off and remained rooted to the spot.

'Oh, children, children,' said Sally in despair. She went over to Miss Harvey, who had come in and was sitting by the table. She had been too busy with her kittens to pay any attention to Miss Harvey of late. Now she put her paws around her neck and her face up to be kissed.

'Poor, dear Sally,' said Miss Harvey, 'it is quite a job to be a mother.'

'What's the use of trying to make us mind, mother? It's much more fun to do the things yourself.' As he spoke, Eben began to chase after his sister's tail, Patty chased after his, and finally Sally joined them, and the three had a mad race around the kitchen floor.

'Isn't it more amusing, mother, than to sing, "Purr, darlings, purr?"' said Eben, as the three paused for breath.

'We made a better song than that the other night,' said Patty.

'You made a song?' Sally was delighted. She was proud of her kittens.

'Eben made most of it, but I helped him,' said Patty, and the two kittens said together:

'Skip, mother, skip with us,
Don't hold us back and make a fuss,
You look so young you're surely able
To jump with us upon the table,
Then give a leap into the sink,
Where you will find a cooling drink.
Skip, mother, skip with us,
Don't hold us back and make a fuss.'

'And you call that poetry,' said their mother. 'I can do better than that.'

'Some day I'll make better poetry than that,' said Eben. And a few weeks later, when he was three months old, and Sally heard an evening song that he had made, she felt that the wish of her heart was to be granted at last, and that her little son was to be the companion she had longed for.

'I'm thankful for my happy days,
So full of work and pleasant plays,
When Patty's tail and mine we chase,
And mother joins us in the race.
I'm thankful for my long black fur,
And mother says it pleases her.
And for my eyes that see so far,
And watch the moon and evening star.

I love both sunshine and the rain
That patters on the window-pane.
I love the people living here.
I think Elvira is a dear.
Miss Harvey is just to my mind,
And even Miss Winifred is kind.
I love the world, I think it's great,
What kitten could want a better fate?
I'm glad my months are only three
With all of life ahead of me.'

'It might be better,' said Sally, who did not believe in too much praise, 'but it is a great improvement on "Skip, mother, skip with us."'

Sally wondered if her son would be a famous poet, like his great-great-grandfather, William Furbush-Tailby, when he was a full-grown cat. She often wondered as to what the future of her children would be. Patty was so extremely bright and enterprising that she felt sure she would be able to look out for herself. And then, too, Sally thought her a beauty, for she looked exactly as she would have liked to look, with her round white face and beautiful eyes set far apart, and her tiger blanket and the tiger cap that covered the back of her head and

came down over her forehead and looked as if it were parted like hair. But Eben, although slower, was a kitten of real distinction. She felt he might make his mark in the world. He was so absorbed in cat fights, even at his tender age, that he might be a great warrior, or he might become like his grandfather, a mighty hunter, for he sat for five minutes at a time before a mouse-hole.

Sally liked to keep them young as long as possible and she was glad that it was to be a late spring, for now, at the beginning of March, there was snow on the ground, and Elvira said to Miss Harvey, 'It will be some time before we can let the kittens out-of-doors.' So at present they were safe from the peril of meeting intruding cats or being chased by that villain Spot.

Meanwhile Sally raced around the kitchen with her children and scampered up and down the stairs that led to the sewing-room as if she were their age and not a sober cat.

'I am having my youth now,' she said to Oxford, who was watching the three with his slightly superior air, as he looked up from his last mouth-

ful of haddock. He was a little too lazy to join in the race, and he preferred to take his exercise out-of-doors.

'Sally, you have learned to brace up,' he said.

This tale is ended, yet, not so,
The kittens' tails, they grow and grow.
A tiger tail that's tipped with white,
A black one, Sally's chief delight.
When the Spring comes, with joyous purr,
In coats of black, and tiger fur,
They'll hasten through the open door,
The earth's great wonders to explore.

THE END

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